



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

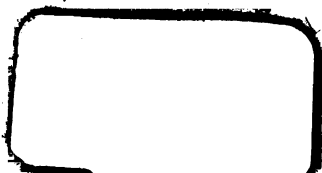
- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

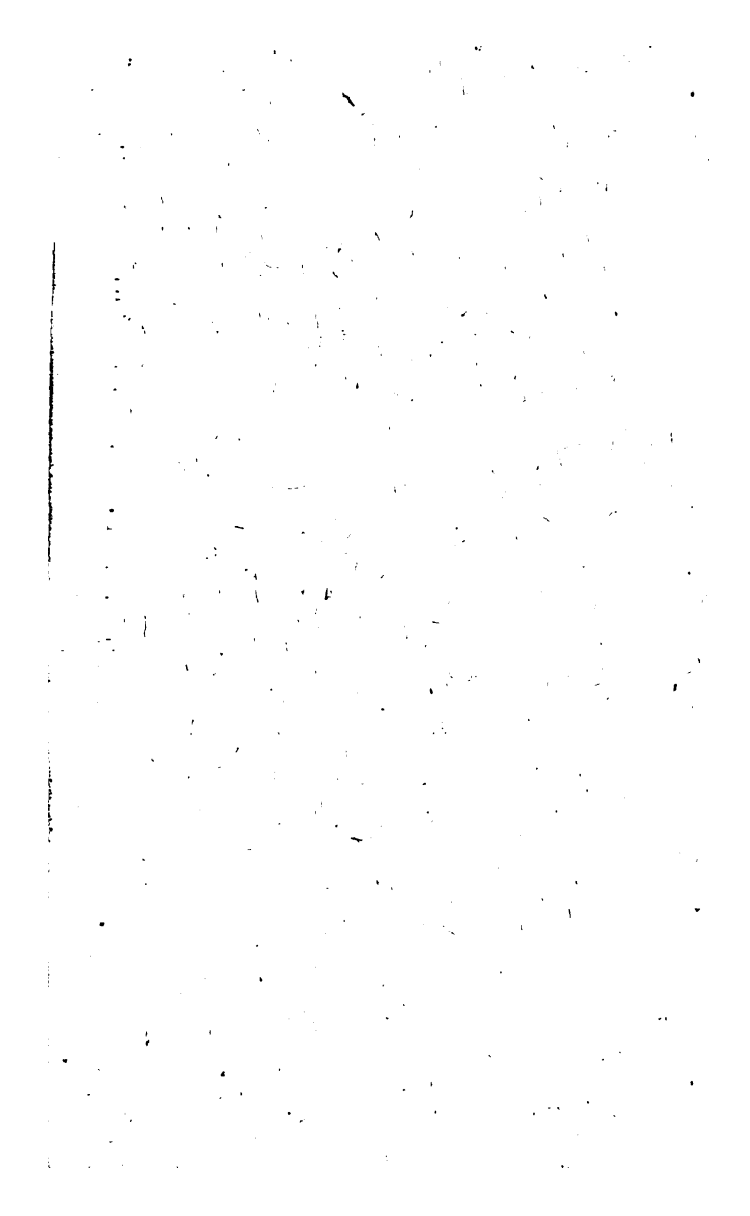
About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

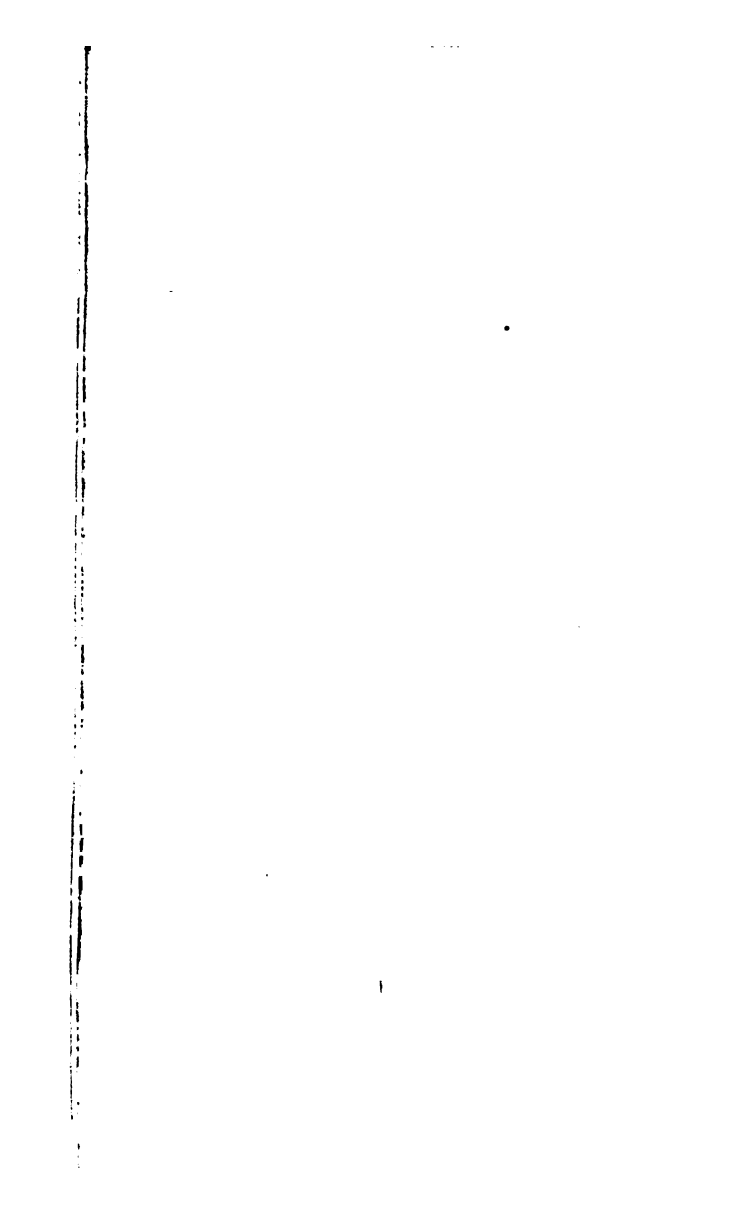
Beale Post,

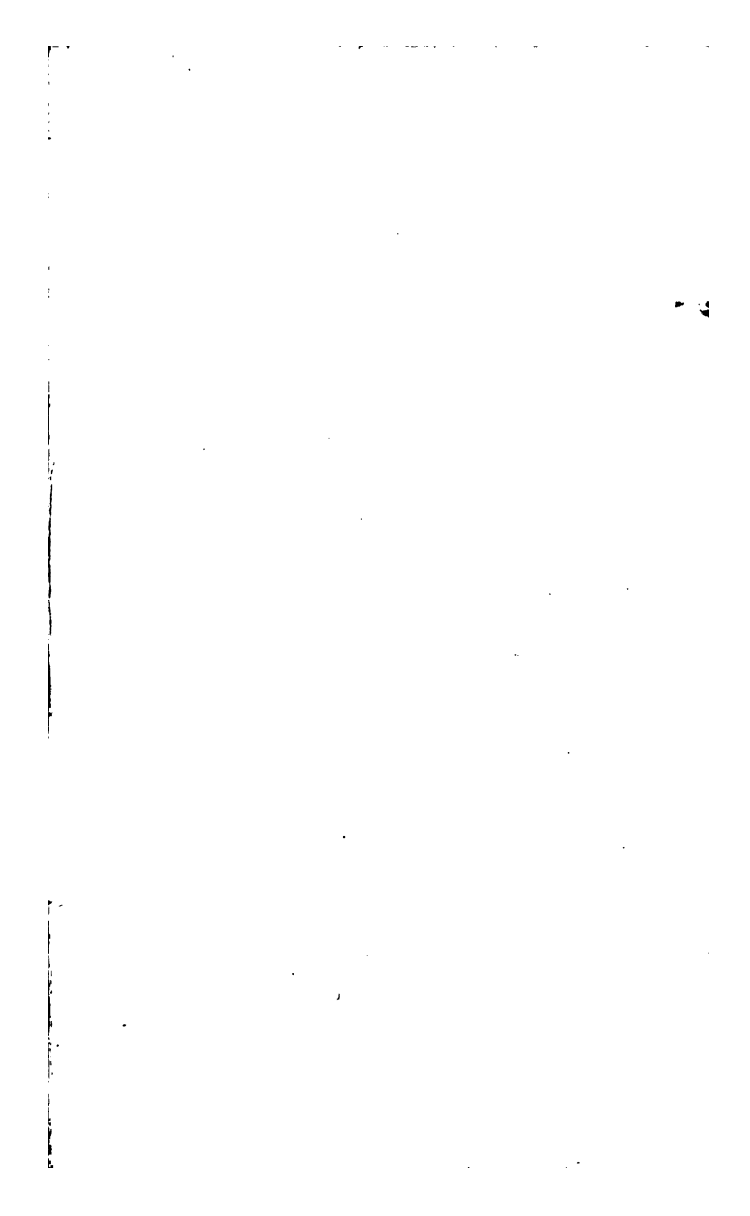
TRIN: COLL: CAMB:











ANECDOTES
OF
POLITE LITERATURE.

IN FIVE VOLUMES.

VOL. IV.



L O N D O N,

Printed for G. BURNET, at Bishop Burnet's Head,
in the Strand.

MDCCCLXIV. B

45

FOR LIBRARY

NEW YORK

ANECDOTES

OF

POLITE LITERATURE,

SECT. I.

Of COMEDY.

IS it not surprizing, that in a nation which abounds with original characters more than any other in the world; there should be so few good comedies? Yet this is the case in England. In how small a compass may we reckon up our best? It should seem that the fault of the generality of our comic writers, is their not introducing the originals which

VOL. IV.

B

they

they may see every day, if they have penetration as well as wit. A jealous husband, a fop, a coward, and a bully may compose an entertaining comedy, by the help of some interesting situations and abundance of wit ; but the excellence of such a piece will be far inferior to one in which an original character is introduced, and displayed in those situations which will best set off its singularity. The originality of Morose throws an air of novelty over a whole comedy, which otherwise is a very tedious piece. I do not dispute but that common characters may form an excellent comedy ; but an uncommon one will ever be most proper, and, if wrote with equal abilities, will undoubtedly be the finest piece. Falstaff, that character so admirably pourtrayed and supported, is original, and one of the best on our stage ; but its merit consists

in those strokes which display its singularity. There is an agreeable extravagance in the character of Bobadil ; it always entertains, and the chief reason is its being original. With all the absurdity we see in Bayes, yet its originality justifies the outrée.

If we enquire into the reason of the paucity of the original characters in our comedy, we shall find it is owing to the want of genius in our poets. A man of wit may write an entertaining comedy, but it must be a man of genius to draw an original character. An excellent comedy must be wrote philosophically.

I know few pieces more entertaining than Congreve's ; that vast flow of wit which every character pours forth, amuses the reader, though it destroys the natural.

Had he wrote a piece in which were introduced a set of wits, whose different species of wit and humour were all marked and distinguished according to their respective characters, then we should not have been disgusted with too much wit. But when a variety of characters, even footmen, converse in strings of witty repartees, there can be no character preserved. In the *Suspicious Husband*, Ranger is a rake with wit and vivacity ; but had the poet given wit also to Strickland, it would have been all unnatural. If Vellum had had three or four witty repartees added to his part, it would have destroyed it entirely. Angelica, in *Love for Love*, if it was not for some smart answers of hers, would be far from appearing a wit : She is a lady of a very amiable character, but does not seem one of any great vivacity ; yet Congreve has given her some speeches
which

which have far too much wit for her character. In Act II. Scene III. she says to old Foresight,

But let me be gone first, and then let no mankind come near the house, but converse with spirits and the celestial signs, the bull, and the ram, and the goat. Bless me ! there are a great many horned beasts among the twelve signs, uncle. But cuckolds go to heaven.

Foresight. But there's but one virgin among the signs, spitfire, but one virgin.

Angelica. Nor there had not been that one, if she had had to do with any thing but astrologers, uncle.

Foresight is an old fool, that would never have said a good thing in his life, had his character been painted naturally. But all are wits with Congreve ; Sir Sampson Legend is a wit too.

Sir Sampson. I have known an astrologer make a cuckold in the twinkling of a star ; and seen a conjurer that could not keep the devil out of his wife's circle.

Forefight. What, does he twit me with my wife too? I must be better informed of this (*aside.*) Do you mean my wife, Sir Sampson? Though you made a cuckold of the king of Bantam, yet, by the body of the sun —

Sir Sampson. By the horns of the moon, you would say, brother Capricorn.

Forefight. Capricorn in your teeth, thou modern Mandeville: Ferdinand Mendez Pinto was but a type of thee, thou liar of the first magnitude. Take back your paper of inheritance; send your son to sea again: I'll wed my daughter to an Egyptian mummy, ere she shall incorporate with a contemner of sciences and a defamer of virtue.

There is something extremely clever in such witty dialogues, and every body must certainly be entertained at reading them; but yet in comedy they are pernicious, unless entirely characteristical. In the piece which I am now mentioning, one of the wittiest answer ever given, is put into the mouth of the footman Jeremy.

Tattle.

Tattle. I hope you are secret in your nature, private, close, ha?

Jeremy. O, Sir! for that, Sir, it is my chief talent: I am as secret as the head of Nilus.

Tattle. Ay! who's he, though? a privy counsellor?

Jeremy. Oh! ignorance! (*aside.*) A cunning Egyptian, Sir, that with his arms would overrun the country; yet nobody could ever find out his head-quarters.

There are a thousand such instances to be met with in every scene almost of this play. Had Foresight's character been better preserved and not spoiled by wit, it would have been original enough. Ben's part is one continual string of witty allusions to his sea-life, while he is truly (in other respects) a mere sea-calf, a great tar-barrel, as Miss Prue calls him; there is not one character in the piece without a flow of wit in their parts; and yet several of them are as far as possible from being wits.

The Way of the World is a much better comedy, and indeed the master-piece of Congreve. The plot is a very good one, and most of the characters will admit a profusion of wit much better than those of Love for Love. There appears to me more of originality of character in this piece than in any of his others. Mirabell is a true fine gentleman, of a very good understanding; what wit the poet has thrown into his character, is far from being ill-placed. Mirabell is a very well drawn character; I know of none that is like it on our stage; there is a proper mixture of good-sense, good-nature, wit, and a certain easiness of conversation, which marks the gentleman. Millamant's is also a very good portrait, and differs from the herd of fine ladies and coquets that disgrace our theatre. We every where see she has a very good understanding,

ing,

ing, though she is so fine a lady, and the vivacity of her character makes her wit appear natural. We do not therefore wonder at that witty answer of hers to Mirabell :

Sententious Mirabell ! Prithge do not look with that violent and inflexible wise face, like Solomon dividing of the child in an old tapestry hanging.

Lady Wishfort's is a very comic character, extremely well supported, and finely ridiculed. Sir Wilful Witwou'd would have been more natural, had he not several witty strokes in his part, much too good for the man ; unless, indeed, he is one of those strange fellows who never say a good thing but when they are drunk ; the following stroke is above Sir Wilful :

The sun's a good pimple, an honest soaker ; he has a cellar at your Antipodes. If I travel, aunt, I touch at your Antipodes. — Your Antipodes

poets are a good rascally sort of topsy-turvy fellows.—If I had a bumper, I'd stand upon my head, and drink a health to 'em. — A match, or no match, cousin with the hard name?

His forgetting Millamant's name is extremely natural; but the rest is not in character. Witwou'd and Petulant have nothing striking in their characters; they are introduced for little purpose, unless to shew the poet's wit, for their's does not sit easy on them. Waitwell, the footman, according to custom, is most abominably witty.

Lady. Starve him gradually, inch by inch.

Waitwell. I'll do't. In three weeks he shall be barefoot; in a month, out at the knees in begging an alms — he shall starve upward and upward, till he has nothing living but his head, and then go out in a stink, like a candle's end upon a save-all*.

There

* If a fondness for shewing wit in his writings is sometimes the occasion of a person's finding many

There 'is nothing in the rest of the characters ; however, Mirabell's and Millamant's, I think, may fairly lay claim to originality, though they are not of that undoubted kind which are so striking in some comedies.

The case is pretty nearly the same with regard to the minds and characters of men, as with respect to their countenances. Man's face is composed of the same parts, of two eyes, one mouth, &c. and yet men's countenances are all different, because they are differently com-

many beautiful thoughts and happy expressions ; it also helps him to many that are false and improper. When an author is in quest of the brilliant, it too often happens that he prefers it to the solid ; mixes low points and turns with strokes really ingenious ; passes from the fine to the tinsel, from the real beauty to that which is only the appearance of it.

Trublet's Essays, p. 325.

posed.

posed. Now the characters of men are not only differently composed, but, moreover, it is not always the same parts, that is, the same virtues, the same vices, the same projects, - that enter into the composition of their character; wherefore the characters of men ought to have a much greater difference and variety than men's faces. To have a distinct and just idea *

* Pour démêler ce qui peut former un caractère, il faut être capable de discerner entre vingt ou trente choses que dit, ou que fait un homme, trois ou quatre traits qui sont propres spécialement à son caractère particulier. Il faut ramasser ces traits; & continuant d'étudier son modele, extraire, pour ainsi dire, de ses actions & de ses discours les traits les plus propres à faire reconnoître le portrait. Ce sont ces traits qui séparés des choses indifferentes que tous les hommes disent & font, à peu près les uns comme les autres, ce sont ces traits qui rapprochés, & réunis ensemble, forment un caractère, & lui donnent, pour ainsi dire, sa rondeur theatrale.

Réflexions Critiques, tome i. p. 129,

of

of what can form a character, requires a capacity of discerning three or four touches that belong to a man's peculiar character, amongst twenty or thirty things that he says or does in common with the rest of mankind. One must collect these touches, and, pursuing the study of one's model, extract as it were from his actions and discourses, such strokes as are properest for conveying a knowledge of the portrait. These are the strokes, which, separated from such indifferent things as all men say and do pretty nearly alike, and afterwards drawn and collected together, constitute what we call a character, and give it, in its manner, its theatrical finishing. All men appear alike to limited capacities; to people of a better understanding, they all seem different; but every man is an original to a poet born with a comic genius.

La

**La nature féconde en bizarres portraits
Dans chaque ame est marquée à des differens traits ;
Un geste la decouvre, un rien la fait paroître,
Mais tout mortel n'a pas des yeux pour la connoître.**

Boileau Art. Poet.

As our poets then are not born with that genius which confers the necessary penetration to discern the peculiar traits in a character, our comedies must want original portraits. A man may possess a vivacity of imagination, without being endued with the faculty of inventing, which in fact is genius; the former will enable him to write a witty comedy, but it is the latter that forms original characters. These conclusions are natural, since it requires a large share of penetration to dive into the characters of men, and penetration is the effect of genius *. Con-
greve

* Pour penser, il faut être homme de genie ;
pour arranger pensées, il suffit d'être homme d'e-
sprit,

greve was a man of an amazing lively wit, but he wanted the art of painting

sprit, de goût, & de bon-sens. Les ouvrages methodiques sont moins rares que les ouvrages beaucoup pensées.

Essais de Trublet, tome iv.

And lord Kaimes justly displays the great abilities necessary for composing a genteel comedy with characters truly original. " But if a lively picture even of a single emotion require an effort of genius, how much greater must the effort be to compose a passionate dialogue, in which there as many different tones of passion as there are speakers ? With what ductility of feeling ought a writer to be endued, who aims at perfection in such a work ; when, to execute it correctly, it is necessary to assume different and even opposite characters and passions, in the quickest succession. And yet this work, difficult as it is, yields to that of composing a dialogue in genteel comedy devoid of passion ; where the sentiments must be tuned to the nicer and more delicate tones of different characters. That the latter is the more difficult task, appears from considering that a character is greatly more complex than a passion ; and that passions are more distinguishable from each other than characters are. Many writers accordingly,

ing a variety of truly original characters.

Moliere is the greatest comic writer the world ever produced. He was the inventor in France of a new species of comedy. The world was a stranger at that time, says the abbé du Bos, to that noble comic kind of writing, which sets true but different characters against one another, so as to cause a result of diverting incidents, though the persons never affect any pleasantry. — This noble Frenchman abounds in original characters; his genius enabled him to be natural in his portraits without injuring his originality *.

There

accordingly, who have no genius for characters, make a shift to represent, tolerably well, an ordinary passion in its plain movements."

Elements of Criticism, vol. ii. p. 155.

* Rousseau pays a just tribute to the memory of this matchless Frenchman, and draws

a pa-

There are many characters in several English comedies, which have not the entire

a parallel between him and his successors. Quant à la comédie, il est certain qu'elle doit représenter au naturel les mœurs du peuple pour lequel elle est faite, afin qu'il s'y corrige de ses vices & de ses défauts, comme un ôte devant un miroir les taches de son visage. Térence & Plaute se tromperent dans leur objet ; mais avant eux Aristophane & Ménandre avoient exposé aux Atheniens les mœurs Athéniennes, & depuis le seul Moliere peignit plus naïvement encore celles des François du siècle dernier à leurs propres yeux. Le tableau a changé ; mais il n'est plus revenu de peindre. Maintenant on copie au théâtre les conversations d'une certaine de maisons de Paris. Hors de cela, on n'y apprend rien des mœurs des François. Il y a dans cette grande ville cinq ou six cent mille ames dont il n'est jamais question sur la scene. Moliere osa peindre des bourgeois & des artisans aussi bien que des Marquis ; Socrate faisoit parler des cochers, menuisiers, cordonniers, maçons. Mais les auteurs d'aujourd'hui, qui sont des gens d'un autre air, se croiroient des-honorés, s'il savoient ce qui se passe au comptoir d'un marchand ou dans la boutique d'un ouvrier ; il ne leur faut que des interlocuteurs illustres &

entire consent of the public to their originality. Sir Bashful Constant, in the Way to keep Him, I have often heard quoted rather as a jumble of extravagant absurdity than an original character : I own it appears to me truly original. The objection which is generally made to it, is its being too ridiculous to be natural, and that such a man never existed. This is the strangest supposition in the world ; I believe there are many who would find originals to this copy even among their acquaintance : They may not, perhaps, see the folly of which Sir Bashful is guilty, in such glaring colours as Mr. Murphy

ils cherchent dans le rang de leurs personnages l'élévation qu'ils ne peuvent tirer de leur génie. Les spectateurs eux-mêmes sont devenus si délicats, qu'ils craindroient de se compromettre à la comédie comme en visite, & ne daigneroient pas aller voir en représentation des gens de moindre condition qu'eux.

Julie, tome ii. p. 169. Amst. edit.

has

has painted it ; but frequently may we meet with the foible strong enough to be the ground-work for such a character. A poet would not find the task of ridiculing the vices and follies easy enough, if he was never allowed to stretch a little upon nature : He ought to throw them into the most ridiculous light, that his satire may be attended with the better effect. Falstaff, perhaps, is the best drawn comic character on our stage ; and yet the objection made against Sir Bashful Constant will also be good, if urged against the extravagance of Falstaff ; for I am persuaded that it would be a most difficult task to find an exact Falstaff in the world ; but we may discover in many men those vices and striking follies which are so admirably blended and ridiculed in Shakespear's inimitable portrait *. The

* When Moliere wanted to paint a man-hater, he did not look out for an original, of which his

Way to keep Him will furnish us with another original character, and very well drawn, though it is not so striking a one as Sir Bashful ; I mean Lovemore. I do not know I ever met with his character on our stage before. Many of the strokes which form it, have often been painted, but as they are mixed in Lovemore, they

character should be an exact copy ; he had then made but a picture, a history ; he had then instructed but by halves : But he collected every mark, every stroke of a gloomy temper that he could observe among men. To this he added all that the strength of his own genius could furnish him with, of the same kind ; and from all these points, well connected and properly disposed, he drew a single character, which was not the representation of the true, but the probable : His comedy was not the history of Alcestes, but his picture of Alcestes was the history of misanthropy, taken in general. And by this means he has given much better instruction than a scrupulous history could possibly have done, by only relating some strictly true strokes of a real man-hater.

Batteux's Principles of Literature, vol. i. p. 19.

form

form a piece which is original, and has great merit.

The ridicule of comedy may easily be misapplied. Nothing should be represented on the stage that debases virtue and ennobles vice : and as it ought to point out the absurdity of follies and foibles, by displaying their effects under ridiculous circumstances ; so the infamy of vice should be rendered detestable by the poignancy of the comic satire. So careful ought a poet to be in this part of his province, that it is dangerous in him to turn into ridicule those vices that are nearly allied to virtues ; because, although the penetrating part of mankind may be able to make the proper distinction, yet the generality will not. “ Il est dangereux, says the abbé de Trublet, de tourner en ridicule des défauts a des vices

voisins de la vertu. Le trait destiné au vicieux va pincer le vertueux. La comédie du Tartuffe a donné lieu à une infinité de railleries & de jugemens téméraires contre des gens de bien. Déniez-vous des dévots, dit un libertin ; ils ressemblent tous au Tartuffe de Molière.

It is also a great fault to paint a bad man with qualities which lessen our sense of his vices ; and yet nothing is more common than this mistake. If there is any fault in the moral of the Discovery, it is in the character of Lord Medway : so vile a member of society ought not to have been painted with those good qualities, which even draws pity from the audience : We cannot but admire the frankness with which he owns and repents some of his crimes, and pays the just
tribute

tribute to the noble virtue of his son; but these strokes only serve to lessen the horror which we ought to have at the thought of his vices; and thus raise in us two contrary sensations, which destroy each other.

The same remark will appear still more just, if we consider the character of Ranger. I know few more pleasing to an audience, or more interesting, from that generosity, frankness, good-nature, and vivacity, which appear in him; but what a number of vices are blended with these good qualities! and by being thus intermixed with virtues, it is impossible to perceive at first the bad tendency of his disposition; those pleasing traits in his character only cover the rake, who laughs at every tie which the laws or humanity place as bars to his passions, and who

even in the very piece attempts to become an adulterer. Were the vices in Ranger's character painted in their proper lights, we should detest instead of liking him: And this shews how extremely wrong it is to make such a mixture of qualities, as to have most of the attention which the play raises, carried towards the worst character in it.—Yet, faulty as it is in this respect, Ranger is certainly an original character; all his vices and good qualities are mingled naturally enough, and he is no common rake, but has several traits which distinguish him in a particular manner from the generality of debauched young fellows.

When comedy is made use of to ridicule the vices and follies of the world, its effects must be good; to set those characters which we ought to imitate in
an

an engaging light, and contrary ones in a ridiculous situation, must strongly represent the advantage of the one, and the folly of the other. Etheridge, either from the natural want of morals in his disposition, or an ignorance of the true end of comedy, painted no characters that were worthy to be imitated; but cloathed his vicious ones in the best colours he could, compatible with their vice: This conduct, which rendered vice amiable in the eyes of the spectators, banished the very ideas of morality; and surely such pieces cannot improve the manners of the times.

How contrary is the conduct of Sir Richard Steele and Addison? The comedies of the former do honour to the stage, from their excellent morality; and in the Drummer, which is one of the best

best on our theatre, though it did not succeed, we see the same vein of religion and humour that displays itself in Addison's prose writings. What ridicule could be more apposite or pointed than the character of Tinsel? We see the ridiculous folly of a free-thinking fop painted in the most ridiculous colours. This comedy has a great deal of original merit; it is composed in quite a different taste from the generality of them on our stage; there are no unnecessary characters introduced, merely to shew the author's wit — and yet no comedy in the English language has more natural and genuine humour, or the characters drawn with more propriety, or better supported.

Johnson understood the drama perfectly, and has left us some excellent comedies.

medies. In his *Every Man in his Humour*, we see jealousy painted in the most natural manner, and forming one of the best drawn characters on our theatre. Kiteley is a personage admirably adapted to comedy, and cannot but give rise, in its opposition to others of a different cast, to many diverting incidents. The poet has also shewn us, in this comedy, that he knew the proper objects for his ridicule: The unravelling displays the absurdity of a man's giving into groundless jealousy that is but formed on suspicion. In his *Silent Woman* also, Morose is an admirable character; and the absurdity of his strange foible set in a humorous light: but the play in general is extremely tedious.

The *Conscious Lovers* is extremely perfect in respect to morality; but it is
a par-

a particular species of comedy, that has almost as near a connection with tragedy. There is no mortal that is not moved to the highest degree on Sealand's discovering Indiana to be his daughter ; the proof of this being a tragic scene, is the sensation it raises in the spectators, which has no sort of connection with a comic one. I have often seen an audience in tears at the representation of that scene. Yet, as the very end of all dramatic poems is to purge the passions and mend the heart, by touching the fancy, the Conscious Lovers must necessarily have great merit; for no comedy can have a finer effect. The fashionable vices and follies are there ridiculed in the most proper manner, by drawing characters such as they ought to be ; we cannot go from the representation of this piece with more corrupt morals than when we came, the case with
many

many others on our stage : On the contrary there are, I hope, but few minds which it will not refine. The end of a comedy is answered, if it cannot do any harm, but may do a great deal of good. If I read a piece with design to laugh much, it should not be the *Conscious Lovers*, for there are many that contain infinitely more wit, and many more comic situations. The plot of the *Conscious Lovers* can hardly be called a comic one.

As I have mentioned this comedy, I cannot help giving an observation or two on the rest of Sir Richard Steele's pieces, which are much inferior to it. The *Funeral*, in point of morality, paints vicious characters in a proper light, and rewards virtuous ones ; but it has no original strokes, no uncommon characters (unless

Lord

Lord Hardy's may be reckoned one) no comic situations, and has little or no business in it; in respect to sentiments, they are adapted to the characters, such as they are drawn, but contain little that is striking. The part of Puzzle is an excellent satire on the lawyers.

The Tender Husband has yet less merit; there is not one character that is striking: A country clown, and a girl whose head is filled with romances, are personages which I should not have expected Sir Richard Steele would have given so large a place to, in a comedy. Inferior writers have recourse to such portraits, because they do not possess genius enough to observe others more original, and that contain more characteristic strokes. In short, I see little in these celebrated comedies, that by any means
answers

answers the reputation they have hitherto possessed.

The Lying Lover is much superior to either of them; contains more humour, more vivacity, and more business. There is something original in the character of Bookwit, and it is extremely well supported. There is a great deal of humour in the scene between Lovemore and Penelope, in the second act, and their mistake gives rise to some comic strokes.

The Conscious Lovers is composed somewhat in the French taste, with a mixture of situations which give rise to contrary sensations. I have already observed that some scenes in this play draw even our tears; it requires a very delicate pencil to succeed in this species of comedy. The generality of our comic-pieces turn
wholly

wholly on wit and humour, and every scene is intended to force the mirth of the audience *. The former is certainly the most noble species of the comic theatre, and must universally be attended with the best effects, since those very

* The chief thing which hindered the success of the *Misanthrope* at its first appearance, remains to this day with a great many people; it does not make them laugh. People say, notwithstanding, that it is an admirable play, because they could not say otherwise without doing themselves discredit. By frequently saying this, and hearing it said by others, it comes to be their own opinion in time, and even their taste to a certain degree. They laugh a little at the representation of this piece; but not enough to be able to say, with sincerity, that of all comedies it is that which gives them most pleasure.

I do not believe that Moliere consulted his servant upon this piece; it was not at all to her taste. If he consulted her now and then upon others, it was because he had a mind sometimes to humour his actors; and it were to be wished, indeed, that he had not done it so often.

Trubler's Essays, p. 254.

moving

moving scenes generally display such consummate virtue or tenderness as overpower the soul, or else a sudden and most exquisite happiness, which makes its way immediately to the heart ; we sympathize immediately with the characters, and tears of joy flow from our subjected eyes : The reconciliation of Lord and Lady Townley ever has this effect.

The School for Lovers is one of these mixed comedies ; for several scenes in it are so moving that the hearts of the audience are not proof against them. In the third act, when Sir John Dorilant tells Cælia of Modely's addressing her, after a tender interview, he says,

Oh ! Cælia ! what a heart have I lost !

Cælia. You cannot, shall not lose it ; worthless as it is, 'tis yours. and only yours, my father, guardian, lover, husband.

[*Hangs weeping upon him.*]

VOL. IV.

D

And

And in the fourth act, when Sir John brings in the papers which transfer all his power to her, she replies,

My tears and my confusion have hitherto hindered me from answering; not the invidious suggestion which you have so cruelly charged me with. What friend, what lover, have I, to engross my attentions? I never had but one, and he has cast me off for ever. — O, Sir! give me the papers, and let me return them where my soul longs to place them.

Both the scenes that contain these speeches are vastly pathetic and moving; and the greatest admirer of mere laughing comedies must allow, that it requires a masterly hand thus to turn and wind the hearts of the spectators; and as the incidents which give rise to these tender scenes have nothing tragic in them, they, properly managed, form very bright passages in comedy.

The

The School for Lovers, in my humble opinion, is not inferior in merit to the Conscious Lovers, and in some respects it is a much better comedy. I honour Mr. Whitehead for not debasing so noble a plot by the introduction of footmen and chambermaids. To me, the part of Tom and Phillis appears a patch of low comedy in the midst of a fine delicate piece. The School for Lovers is free from any such blemishes ; and as the author designed it for genteel comedy, he did well to reject those characters, so capital in many pieces of a middling rank. In respect of character, the School for Lovers is certainly excellent. The stage ought on all occasions to be made the school of virtue ; and, generally speaking, those pieces are reckoned the best on the English theatre, which either exhibit noble and striking characters, that are worthy

of imitation, or that ridicule the vices or foibles of the times. In Sir John Dorian we see one of the most amiable, generous, and disinterested men that could have been created ; a character worthy of being exhibited on the stage of a polite and refined people ; and what shews the skill of the poet, his excellencies are not unnatural ; his character is well supported and easy ; and though he may not at first be reckoned an original character, I make no doubt but he will, when we consider that the traits of originality appear strongest in a man whose passions are violent, and of the impetuous kind, such as suspicion, jealousy, or revenge ; but in a calm picture of what may be called still-life — disinterested love, generosity, and greatness of soul — the characteristic strokes must necessarily be softer, and appear more blended with the general temper

temper of the man *. Cælia is a young and virtuous girl, whose breast is filled with the utmost delicacy of sentiment, gratitude, and virtuous inclinations, and finely imagined, to produce those tender scenes between her and Sir John. Araminta is a natural contrast to Cœlia; she is very sprightly, and, without being a coquette, greatly enlivens the piece. The contrast between Sir John and Modely is no less just; the latter is a perfect male

* Les grands mouvemens des passions sont les plus aisés à peindre. Ce qui a des traits marqués, ce qui est fort & simple, un homme plein de vivacité & de chaleur, quoique d'un esprit ordinaire, l'exprimera quelquefois fort bien. Mais les nuances, les sentimens composés de plusieurs autres, ces illusions fines que le cœur fait à l'esprit, en un mot tout le jeu des passions, voilà ce qui ne peut être bien rendu que par un génie du premier ordre, par un écrivain qui joint toute la finesse de l'esprit à toute la délicatesse du sentiment.

Essais sur divers Sujets de Littérature, &c.

tome iv. p. 279.

D 3

coquette,

coquette, with a sufficient quantity of vanity and assurance, which sets off the other's manly virtues to the greatest advantage. Belmour is the fine, easy, unaffected gentleman, who, without possessing the gravity of Sir John, is free from the vanity of Modely.

This noble comedy is entirely free from the looseness of Sir George Etheldredge, or the brutality of such characters as Sir H. Beagle in the *Jealous Wife*, equally the disgrace of the theatre. When Lady Beverly first tells Sir John Dorilant of his rival in those words,

Undoubtedly there is a man :

He replies in that generous manner,

Tell me who, that I may — No ; that I may give her to him, and make her happy, whatever becomes of me.

How noble is this sentiment ! the lover is on fire to know the man, but suddenly checks.

checks his ardour ; and the greatness of his soul gets the better of his passion, at its very height. And again, in the third act, when he is talking to Araminta about Cælia, he says,

Besides, they are not his, but her inclinations, which give me any concern. It is the heart I require : The lifeless form, beauteous as it is, would only elude my grasp ; the shadow of a joy, not the reality.

And in the fifth act, when he reproaches Modely :

Honour ! Mr. Modely ! 'Tis a sacred word : You ought to shudder when you pronounce it. Honour has no existence but in the breast of truth ; 'tis the harmonious result of every virtue combined.—You have sense, you have knowledge ; but I can assure you, Mr. Modely, though parts and knowledge without the dictates of justice, or the feelings of humanity, may make a bold and mischievous member of society even courted by the world, they only in my eye make him more contemptible.

D 4

But

But it would be endless to repeat every sentiment in this noble play, which does honour to our theatre; they, on the whole, form a fine picture of humanity. The poet rather aimed at painting beautiful nature, than displaying his own wit. The natural plainness of Addison appears, not the brilliancy of Congreve.

The Discovery, by Mrs. Sheridan, is another comedy in which are contained several of those moving scenes which force the tears of an audience. This comedy has great merit; and though it

* What Mons. Diderot means by saying our comedies are without manners and taste, I cannot understand; but must attribute it to that vanity so characteristic of the French nation. “ Nous avons, says he, des comédies: les Anglois n’ont que des satyres, à la vérité pleines de force & de gaieté, mais sans mœurs & sans goût.

Discours sur la Poësie Dramatique, prefixed to his *Le Pere de Famille*, p. 83.

bears

bears a great resemblance to the *Conscious Lovers* * (a superior piece) in the discovery of Mrs. Knightly being Lord Medway's daughter, and in the character of Colonel Medway ; yet it has a fine moral, and no one can be present at the representation of it without feeling many of those sensations, which the theatre ought always to occasion : Lady Medway's saving Lady Flutter from destruction, should be a lesson to that giddiness,

* It is of great prejudice to the success of many pieces, to resemble others which have been wrote some time before, and are in possession of the stage. Had the *Suspicious Husband* been a less excellent comedy, its similitude, in some instances, to *Every Man in his Humour* would have hurt it. The character of Strickland is very like that of Kirely : and the inclination they both have, by starts, to disclose the secret of their jealousy to their servants Thomas and Lucetta, Kirely's in the third scene of the third act in *Every Man in his Humour*, and Strickland's in the third scene of the second act, is almost a copy.

which

which does not pay a proper regard to those little quarrels in the marriage state which are apt, for a time, to get the better of affection, and, if not prevented, bring on the greatest evils ; and to that imprudence in suffering the most distant addresses from such men as Lord Medway. Colonel Medway's is a most noble character ; and Sir A. Branville's an original one ; his stiff formality, which is so very like the very prudery of an old maid, is well drawn ; and though not a considerable personage in the piece, there is great merit in the painting.

These comedies of the tender kind seldom contain many of those very comic situations, which heighten the ridiculous so extremely in some pieces ; such interesting plots have great advantages ; but I do not here mean to compare the two species.

species of comedy : The School for Lovers and the Suspicious Husband are so diametrically opposite in their respective plans, as fully to prove that there are more species of comedy than one. These interesting situations, if they are properly introduced, give a wonderful vivacity to the fable of a piece. The Suspicious Husband will alone furnish us with several instances : Frankly's mistake in believing Jacintha a man—Clarinda's catching him—Bellamy's seeing Frankly with Jacintha — Ranger's coming into Mrs. Strictland's dressing-room — the adventure of the hat — Ranger's adventure with Jacintha in disguise — and his carrying her off to his friend Bellamy—add to these, Ranger's parting Bellamy and Frankly in the fourth act, and the situations which follow ; which I cannot help thinking one of the very best comic scenes

on.

on our stage, the humour of it is worked up to such a climax, as to produce the finest effect imaginable. In that excellent comedy of Mr. Murphy's, the Way to keep Him, there are also several most comic situations : I hardly know a more ridiculous one than Lovemore's intrigues being all-blown up in the fifth act; the ridicule is finely pointed, and carried to a most pleasing height. In the fourth act, when Lady Constant comes in to Sir Bashful and Lovemore, after reading his letter, there follows a scene truly comic, in which Sir Bashful brings Lovemore out of his scrape. There are also several others, which give great life and vivacity to the piece.—In All in the Wrong there are many of these interesting comic situations, which make the plot of that piece as interesting as almost any one I know. Lady Restless,
 seeing.

seeing from her window Sir John take Belinda in his arms when she faints : Sir John's listening to Lady Restless, while she is looking at the picture and talking to herself, are very droll scenes : But the latter end of the fourth act is full of business, and contains several most interesting situations. When Sir John has shewn in the mask whom he takes to be Mrs. Marmalet, she says,

But in a little time you'll make up all quarrels with your lady, and I shall get ruined by this —

Sir John. No, no, never fear. I shall never be reconciled to her—I hate her—detest her.

Lady Restless (unmasking.) Do you so, Sir?—Now Sir John, what can you say now, Sir?—

Sir John. My Lady Restless!—Confusion! What shall I say?—

After a little altercation, he tells her,

I say, my dear, for I still regard you—and this was all done to — to — cure your jealousy — all done to cure you of your jealousy.

After

After this most comic scene succeeds another, equally amusing. When Beverly is discovered to be in the closet, and Sir John has of course turned the tables upon her, she recollects herself, and retaliates his speech :

Why, my dear, this was all done—to—to—to—cure you of your jealousy — for I knew you would do as you have done, and so I — resolved to do as I have done — was it not well done, my dear? ha ! ha * !

* Miss Haughton has great merit in the part of Lady Restless; but I once saw it performed in a superior manner, at Lynn in Norfolk, by Mrs. Dyer, an actress in a strolling company : In my humble opinion, she entered more into the spirit of the character, and acted it with greater vivacity. Her husband performed Sir John Restless infinitely better than Mr. Yates. There are but few, even on the London theatres, who excel Mr. and Mrs. Dyer : She does Mrs. Oakly with great spirit, and is admirable in Belvidera, and Zara in the Mourning Bride. Yates is not to be compared to Mr. Dyer in Major Oakley.

I hardly

I hardly know a more truly comic, or better managed scene in any comedy than this; the situations are infinitely humorous, and raise the mirth of the audience to the highest pitch.

The scene in the second act of the Jealous Wife, where Mrs. Oakley dissembles with her husband, is very entertaining; and that in the third act, where she overhears his conversation with Harriot, is truly comic; the two last scenes also of the fifth act are well contrived and interesting.

The last maxim I shall endeavour to inculcate for the composition of comedy, is never to introduce a disgusting brutality on the stage, of any kind, for the sake of originality. I know no comedy in which there is so flagrant an instance
of

of this conduct as in the *Jealous Wife*: Sir Harry Beagle is a character wretchedly drawn, and his brutality is too shocking for the stage. Let the reader consult the beginning of the second act, between Tom and Sir H. Beagle, which is very low and very dull; I can see but little wit in the pedigree. Ruffet enquiring after his daughter, Sir Harry answers him about the mare; then,

Ruffet. Damn her blood! — Harriot! my dear provoking Harriot! where can she be? Have you got any intelligence of her?

Sir H. No, faith, not I: We seem to be quite thrown out here. — But, however, I have ordered Tom to try if he can hear any thing of her among the ostlers.

Soon after Sir Harry proposes,

Suppose you put an advertisement into the news-papers, describing her marks, her age, her height, and where she strayed from. I recovered a bay mare once by that method.

Such

Such sentiments as these, one would think, were adapted to please the mob of Smithfield, but how a polite audience can bear such strings of vulgarness, is to me surprizing. Sir Harry, in the same scene, most emphatically, in his hunting dialect, cries out,

Soho ! Pufs — Yoics !

And again,

Soho ! Hark forward ! Wind 'em and cross 'em !
Hark forward, Yoics ! Yoics !

And in the fourth act, in the scene between Sir Harry and Harriot, she tells him she is determined not to marry him.

Sir H. But your father's determined you shall, Miss ! — So the odds are on my side — I am not quite sure of my horse, but I have the rider hollow.

She entreats him to be off. Among the rest of his polished answers, he says,

VOL. IV.

E

I can't,

I can't, damme.

And then criticises her shape;

A fine going thing — she has a deal of foot —
treads well upon her pasterns — goes above her
ground —

Har. Peace, wretch — Do you talk to me, as
if I were your horse?

Sir H. Horse! Why not speak of my horse?
If your fine ladies had half as many good quali-
ties; they would be much better bargains.

And again,

Mayhap so. — But what signifies talking to you?
— The 'squire shall know your tricks. — He'll
doctor you, — I'll go and talk to him. He'll
break you in. — If you won't go in a snaffle, you
must be put in a curb, — He'll break you, damme.

To crown all this low, vulgar, Smith-
field conversation of Sir Harry's, comes
his swooping his mistress to Lord Trin-
ket for a horse. — I must own I cannot
see the end of making such a brutal con-
temptible character so considerable in the
drama;

drama ; sketching such a vile caricature requires little art and no genius ; and what entertainment a polite audience can receive from his miserable dulness, I cannot possibly apprehend.

The Jealous Wife is but a middling comedy ; there is very little character in it ; excepting Major Oakley, which is not drawn amiss, there is none the least striking. Mrs. Oakley's jealousy is unnatural : Her husband is a very poor body, Lord Trinket a common fop, and Harriot one of the most insipid Misses in comedy ; her lover has nothing striking in him ; Lady Freelove, in the hands of a master, would have made a good comic character. The success this piece has met with, is owing much more to the incomparable powers of Mr. Garrick and Mrs. Pritchard, than to any great share of merit in itself.

S E C T. II.

Of the SUBLIME and PATHETIC.

ALTHOUGH Longinus has wrote a particular treatise on this subject, yet authors are at this day not determined in what the sublime consists. Monf. Boileau, in his preface to his excellent translation of that author, has endeavoured to explain his meaning. Monf. de la Motte expresses it to be *the new and the true united in a grand idea, and expressed with elegance and brevity*; and as examples, he cites a passage out of Moses: God said, Let there be light; and there was light.

And another from Homer, where Ajax cries out,

Great God! give us but day, and then fight against us.

These passages are both quoted by Longinus,

ginus, but he does not say expressly that the former is really sublime. Mons. Rollin, however, contradicts la Motte's opinion, and will not allow either of them to be sublime. This variety of opinions will render an attempt to explain the sublime, chiefly from modern authors, an unentertaining task. There are few expressions more indefinitely used, or more confounded with others, than this. In reading good authors, we are apt to say, "That is very sublime!"—"This is expressed in a most sublime manner!" while the passages in question are, perhaps, rather *beautiful* than *great*. These mistakes, which happen very frequently, and which mislead our taste, arise from not duly reflecting on what the true sublime is.

Taken in a general sense, it extends not only to the fine arts, but exists in the

vast, though lifeless productions of nature. Whatever exalts the soul, or strikes forcibly on the imagination, may be justly denominated sublime; whether it be a poem, a picture, a piece of music, or a range of immense rocks. The disposition of mind raised by the sublime varies according to the object. In poetry and painting, it is generally pleasing; but thunder and the Alps are both sublime, and more connected with awe than pleasure. This extensive variety displays the impossibility of defining the sublime in a few words; in this sketch I shall confine myself to the sublime of the fine arts*.

The

* Rousseau describes great effects attending the sight of sublime objects, in the beautiful description in *Julie of the Valois*. *J'admirais l'empire qu'ont sur nos passions les plus vives les êtres les plus insensibles, & je méprisois la philosophie*

The nice line which separates the sublime from the beautiful, is very difficult.

to

sophie de ne pouvoir pas même autant sur l'ame qu'une suite d'objets inanimés.

Tome i. p. 121.

Lord Kaimes observes very justly, that regularity is required in small figures, and order in small groupes; but that, in advancing gradually from small to great, regularity and order are less and less required. This remark seems to explain the extreme delight we have in viewing the face of nature, when sufficiently enriched and diversified by objects. The bulk of the objects seen in a natural landscape are beautiful, and some of them grand. A flowing river, a spreading oak, a round hill, an extended plain, are delightful; and even a rugged rock, or barren heath, though in themselves disagreeable, contribute, by contrast, to the beauty of the whole. Joining to these the verdure of the fields, the mixture of light and shade, and the sublime canopy spread over all; it will not appear wonderful that so extensive a group of glorious objects should swell the heart to its utmost bounds, and raise the strongest emotions of grandeur. The spectator is conscious of an enthusiasm which cannot bear confinement, nor the strictness of regularity and

to draw : Out of twenty persons, not two would be of the same opinion. The extreme great and noble passages of an author are easily discovered ; but the softer ones are more doubtful ; they, like the fine tints of a picture, are blended as it were with the general mass of colours. There are several sources of the sublime ; Longinus reckons five, and these may be either diminished or increased : Now there are some strokes of poetry which contain all these several excellencies ; and many which possess only the least of them, and whose pretensions to the sublime may be too weak to be allowed ; it will

order ; he loves to range at large, and is so enchanted with shining objects, as to neglect slight beauties and defects. Thus it is that the delightful emotion of grandeur depends little on order and regularity : and when the emotion is in its height, by a survey of the greatest objects, order and regularity are almost totally disregarded.

Elements of Criticism, vol. i. p. 298.
therefore

therefore be difficult always to determine how many inferior strokes are tantamount to one of the finest*.

I. The first and the greatest source of the sublime, is grandeur of conception,

* The treatise of Longinus is rather on the perfection of writing in general, than the sublime in particular; where he gives us something of a definition, this will appear very evident.

Όταν εν υπ' ανδρῶ ἐμφρονῶ, καὶ ἐμπειρῶ λογῶν, πολλὰκις ἀκχομενοι τι πρῶ μὲγ' ἰλοφροσυνῇ τὴν ψυχὴν μὴ συνδιατιθῇ, μὴδ' ἐγκαταλείπῃ τὴ διανοία πλείον τι λογομεν το ἀναθεωρούμενοι, πικρὴ δ' αὖ το ζυγχεῖς ἐπισκοπῆς, εἰς ἀπανξήσεις, ἢ αὖ ἐτ' ἀληθεῖς Ὑψῶς, μεχρὶ μόνος τῆς ἀκῆς ζῶζομενοι. Τίλο γὰρ τῶ οὐλί μεγὰ, ἔ πολλὴ μὲν ἡ ἀναθεωρῆσις, δυσκολῶ δὲ, μάλλον δ' ἀδυνατῶ, ἢ καλεῖσθαι αἰσῆσις, ἰσχυρὰ δὲ ἡ μνημῆ, καὶ δυσεξαλειπτῶ. Οὕτως δὲ καλὰ νομίζε Ὑψῆ καὶ ἀληθινὰ, τὰ διαπαύῃ ἀρεσκονία, καὶ πασιν. Όταν γὰρ τοῖς ἀπο διαφορῶν ἐπιτηδεύματων, βίῳ, ζῆλῳ, πλίκῳ, λόγῳ, ἐν τι, καὶ ταῦτοι ἀμὰ περὶ τῶν αὐτῶν ἀπασὶ δοκῇ, τοθ' ἡ ἐξ ἀσυμφωνῶν ὡς κρῖσις καὶ συγκαταθεσις, τὴν ἐπὶ τῷ θαυμαζομένῳ πῶσιν ἰσχυρὰν λαμβάνει καὶ ἀταμφιδέλω.

Long. Περὶ Ὑψῆς, ζ.

or the thought. This is the mere effect of invention, and speaks the truly great genius far more than the finest composition. There are some thoughts which display themselves in a *vast idea*, which are somewhat different from others, which paint a certain greatness of soul which is wonderfully captivating.

In the fourth book of the Iliad, Agamemnon reproves Diomed for not being engaged :

No words the godlike Diomed return'd,
But heard respectful, and in secret burn'd.

He, like a rough old soldier, was determined that his actions only should speak for him ; a thought infinitely great in Homer, for Diomed expresses more by this most judicious silence than he could have done in ten thousand verses. Longinus has celebrated a similar passage

sage in the Odyssæy, the silence of Ajax, which is undoubtedly noble, and far above expression ; and his remark on it is very just : “ Hence it comes to pass, says he, that a naked thought without words, challenges admiration, and strikes by its grandeur.” To arrive at excellency like this, we must needs suppose that which is the cause of it ; I mean, that an orator of the true genius, must have no mean and ungenerous way of thinking. For it is impossible for those who have groveling and servile ideas, or are engaged in the sordid pursuits of life, to produce any thing worthy of admiration, and the perusal of all posterity. Grand and sublime expressions must flow from them, and them alone, whose conceptions are stored and big with greatness *.

An

* Γραφα πα και περι το τοις τοις Υψος μεγαλοφρο-
 συης απηχημα. Οθεν και φωνης διχα θαυμαζεται ποτε
 ψιλη

An expressive silence has always a wonderful effect : That of the heralds from Agamemnon to Achilles, in the Iliad, is finely imagined.

Th'unwilling heralds act their lord's commands,
Pensive they walk along the barren sands;
Arriv'd, the hero in his tent they find,
With gloomy aspect, on his arm reclin'd.
At awful distance long they silent stand,
Loth to advance, or speak their hard command :
Decent confusion ! * —

It seems as if the greatest poets had attempted to render this striking beauty

ψιλή καθ' εαυτήν η εννοια δι' αυλο το μεγαλοφρον· ως η τε Αιαίη· εν Νεκυια Γιωπη, μετ' α και παίη· υψηλοτερον λογον, πρωτον εν το, εξ υ γινεται, προϋπολθισθαι παυλως αναικαιον, ως εχειν δι του αληθη εηλορα μη ταπεινον φρονημα, και αγενες. Ου δε γαρ ωον τε μικρα και δολοπρεπη φρονητας και επιηδευοιτας παρ' ολον τον βιον, θαυμαστον τι και τε παίη· αιων· εξεργειν αξιων· μεγαλοι δε οι λογοι των, καλ' το εικ·, ων αν εμβριθεις ωσιν αι εννοιαι. Ταυτη και εις τῶς μαλιστα φρονηματίας εμπιπ'ει τα υπερφουα, ο γαρ τω Παρμενιωφι φησαι, εγω μιν αν ηρκισθην.

Long. Περι Υψους, θ'.

* Book I. ver. 426.

remarkable

remarkable in their works ; the silence of Dido is also extremely sublime :

*Illa solo fixos oculos averſa tenebat ;
Nec magis incepto vultum ſermone movetur,
Quam ſi dura ſilex aut ſtet Marpeſſa cautes.
Tandem corripuit ſeſe, atque inimica refugit
In nemus umbriferum —**

She diſdains to converſe with a man who ſhe thinks has forſook her in a baſe manner, and expreſſes her anger in a much more noble manner than any complaints could have done.—I cannot here avoid mentioning a famous picture of antiquity, wherein ſilence (if I may ſo expreſs myſelf) is moſt ſublimely introduced : It is Agamemnon ſacrificing his daughter Iphigenia. Timantes, the painter, gave Calchas a ſorrowful look ; he then painted Ulyſſes more ſorrowful, and afterwards her uncle Menelaus with all the grief and concern in his countenance,

* *Æn.* VI. ver. 469.

which

which his pencil was able to display. By this gradation he had exhausted the passion, and had no art left for the distress of her father Agamemnon, which required the strongest heightening of all; he therefore covered up his head in his garment, and left the spectator to imagine that excess of anguish which colours were unable to express. This noble thought was copied by Poussin in his picture of the death of Germanicus. It is reckoned a master-piece in this painter to have rendered Agrippina so easy to be distinguished in that picture: After having treated the different kinds of affliction of the other personages, as passions capable of being expressed; he places on Germanicus's bed-side a woman of a noble dress and stature, hiding her face with her hands, and in an attitude entirely expressive of the deepest sorrow.

It

It is easy to apprehend that the affliction of this personage must surpass that of all the rest, since this able artist, despairing to represent it, got over the difficulty by taking the hint from the Grecian's invention.

Herodotus has put a noble answer into the mouths of the Athenians to Alexander the Macedonian, who had been sent by Mardonius to prevail on them to enter into a league with the Persians :

Νῦν τε ἀπάγγελε Μαρδονίῳ, ὡς Ἀθηναῖοι λέγουσι, ἔς' ἃν ὁ ἥλιος τὸν αὐτὸν ὁδὸν ἴη τῇ πρὸς καὶ νῦν ἔρχεσθαι, μήκοτε ὁμολογήσειν ἡμέας Ξέρξῃ*.

I do not know any passage, even in Demosthenes, where the high spirit of liberty is more sublimely represented †. It speaks a certain greatness of mind,

* Page 507, edit. Gronov.

† See Geddes, p. 64.

which,

which, well expressed, will always bear the stamp of sublimity. The High-priest's answer, in the *Athalia* of Racine, is of this nature : He is told by the officer of the great rage of Athalia against him, and that it was expected the haughty princess would soon attack God in his sanctuary ; the High-priest, unmoved, makes this answer,

Celui qui met un frein à la fureur des flots,
Sait aussi des mechans arrêter les complots ;
Soumis avec respect à sa volonté sainte,
Je crains Dieu, cher Abner, & n'ai point d'autre
crainte.

Dr. Young, speaking of those happy men, who, in the last day, stand unmoved amidst innumerable horrors, remarks,

Others, whose long attempted virtue stood
Fix'd as a rock, and broke the rushing flood,
Whose firm resolve nor beauty could melt down,
Nor raging tyrants from their posture frown ;
Such

Such, in this day of horrors, shall be seen
 To face the thunders with a godlike mien;
 The planets drop, their thoughts are fix'd above;
 The center shakes, their hearts disdain to move;
 An earth dissolving, and a heav'n thrown wide,
 A yawning gulph, and fiends on ev'ry side.
 Serene they view, impatient of delay,
 And bless the dawn of everlasting day.

The true sublime, which is founded in
 heroic sentiment, is to be met with in
 what we call the untutored mind, as
 well as the most polished. I heard a little
 anecdote not long since, which I am very
 well assured is true, and will not be fo-
 reign to the present subject. It happened
 since the breaking out of the late war.—
 Captain R— being taken prisoner by the
 French Indians, at a battle in North
 America, was carried to their town, to
 be sacrificed in the usual barbarous man-
 ner; he was even tied to the stake, and
 on the verge of the most cruel tortures,

when an old Indian of authority suddenly reprieved him from death, and took him for his slave. His servitude was tolerable, and his treatment humane : His master taught him their language, and the whole circle of Indian science — to build canoes, — to kill beaver — to hunt deer — and lastly to scalp the enemy. A year and a half elapsed in this manner, when an engagement happened between a party of the English and the Indians. The old man took Captain R— up a little hill, and addressed him as follows : “ My friend ! you see the men of your country are going to attack us — you have lived with me a year and a half ; you came to me totally ignorant, but I have made a man of you — I have taught you to build canoes — to kill beaver — to hunt — and to scalp your enemy : Are you not obliged to me ? ” Captain R— expressing

ing his gratitude, the Indian asked him: "Have you a father?"—"I believe he is living," replied Captain R—. "Poor man! I pity him. Know, I was once a father! My son fell at my side — fell gloriously! — covered with wounds — but I revenged his death — I scalped — and then killed his enemy." Making here a pause, he proceeded: "Behold that sun! With what a brightness it shines to you! Since that day a cloud has darkened all its radiance in my eyes — See that tree (pointing to a magnolia) which blossoms so fair for you; to me it has lost all its beauty. — Go — return to your father. — Let the sun shine with all its brightness for him; and the tree appear in all its beauty."

See the true sublime of sentiment: When we reflect on the manly sense and

generosity of this untutored Indian, let us not judge of whole nations from partial accounts; but remember, that every people are equally the work of the omnipotent Deity: If we are more enlightened, it should inspire us with sentiments of universal benevolence — not with the vain impertinence of pride. When we condemn a whole people as barbarians, let us imitate the exalted sentiments of the Indian, and display as much humanity for the unknown, as he did greatness of soul.

In the instances which I have here given, the sublime appears in an heroic greatness of soul, which is thrown either into the actions or words of the respective characters. The reader, from his memory, will add many others; but I know none more expressive and remarkable

able than those I have quoted, and in each of them the thought is what gives the great sublimity.

There are a vast number of passages to be collected from the poets, in which the grandeur of expression is displayed rather in a different manner from those I have already quoted ; the relation or description of a vast or noble idea. Homer describes Discord with the greatest sublimity of thought.

Οὐρανὸν ἐσήμεξε κατὰ, καὶ ἐπὶ χθονὶ βαίνει*.

Of the same nature is Virgil's of Fame, which is copied from that of Homer :

Ingrediturque solo, & caput inter nubila condit.

And Shakespear's of Slander ; which, in my humble opinion, is equal, if not superior to either.

* While scarce the skies her horrid head can bound,

She stalks on earth.

Il. iv. ver. 443.

F 3.

Slander,

Slander,
 Whose head is sharper than the sword, whose tongue
 Out-venoms all the worms of Nile, whose breath
 Rides on the posting winds, and doth belye
 All corners of the world, kings, queens, and states,
 Maids, matrons; nay, the secrets of the grave
 This Slander enters*.

The poet, in this sublime passage, raises and almost terrifies our ideas with the immense extent of his thoughts. This description does not only display a grandeur of conception, but the most skilful application of figures—the true enthusiasm of composition—and that magnificence of style which clothes great ideas in a suitable language.—Another of these majestic thoughts is to be found in the Wisdom of Solomon, and much like those I have quoted:

The almighty word leaped down—it touched the heaven, but it stood upon the earth.

* Cymbeline.

How

How much grandeur is there in Homer's idea of the father of the gods!

Ἦ, καὶ κυανέσιν ἐπ' ὀφρύσι νεῦσε Κρονίων.
 Ἀμβρόσιαι δ' ἄρα χαίται ἐπερρώσαντο ἀνάκτα,
 Κράτος ἀπ' ἀθάνατοιο, μέγαν δ' ἐλέλιξεν Ὀλύμπου.

Mr. Pope's translation of these lines is,

He spoke, and awful bends his sable brows;
 Shakes his ambrosial curls, and gives the nod,
 The stamp of fate, and sanction of a god.
 High heav'n with trembling the dread signal took,
 And all Olympus to the center shook.

Mr. Webb's observation on it is extremely just: "What shall we say (says he) when the noblest images are ruined for the sake of a jingle? Had it not been for the rhyme, that third line had never found its way into this description. I need not observe to you how it interrupts the succession of the ideas and embarrasses the image. It is owing to the same

cause, that Jupiter is represented shaking his curls before he had given the nod; whence that, which in the original was a happy effect, becomes in the translation a trifling action *. — Milton shewed the same grandeur of imagination in his description of Satan :

On th'other side, Satan, alarm'd,
 Coll'ecting all his might, dilated stood,
 Like Teneriff or Atlas, unremov'd;
 His stature reach'd the sky, and on his crest
 Sat horror plum'd.

The comparing him to a vast mountain is very great; but the two last lines are inexpressibly sublime: *On his crest sat horror plum'd*, is an image amazingly striking.

Dr. Young's description of the Deity is very noble, a few strokes particularly are great:

* Remarks on the Beauties of Poetry, p. 26.

Who strikes thro' nature with the solemn roar
Of dreadful thunders, points it where to fall;
And in fierce light'ning wraps the flying ball;
Not he who trembles at the darted fires,
Falls at the sound, and in the flash expires *.

The sixth book of Milton is almost a continued picture of the truest sublime; more so than any book even in the Iliad itself. The coming forth of the Messiah is described with most wonderful pomp of diction, cloathing the vastest grandeur of ideas, "Till, in the last place, the Messiah comes forth in the fullness of majesty and terror. The pomp of his appearance amidst the roarings of his thunders, the flashes of his lightnings, and the noise of his chariot wheels, is described with the utmost flights of human imagination †." These lines of Mr. Addison's

* Paraphrase on Job. Works, vol. i. p. 209.

† Spectator, vol. v. No. 333.

may be quoted with great propriety in an essay on the sublime, being very fine themselves.

The imagery of Milton is almost every where sublime, and bears the stamp of the finest and most luxuriant imagination. In how many passages do the naked thoughts shine with the brightest splendor; but who is proof against their effect, when they kindle up the noblest flame of poetic enthusiasm!

Now wav'd their fiery swords, and in the air
Made horrid circles; two broad suns their shields
Blaz'd opposite; while expectation stood
In horror*.

How

* This, and some other quotations, which I have ranged under *grandeur of conception*, seem at first sight to belong rather to the *application of figures*; but when the imagery displays a vast and noble thought, I think it deserves chiefly to be admired for its capital beauty. But every reader will

How great is it to describe their shields as suns striking circles in the air; and never was imagery more sublime than that noble one of Expectation standing in horror. The two greatest of poets are very sublime in their descriptions of shields: Milton has another very noble one:

Such destruction to withstand
He hasted, and oppos'd the rocky orb
Of tenfold adamant, his ample shield
A vast circumference.

And Homer's, of the ægis of Jove is wonderfully sublime:

High in the midst the blue-ey'd Virgin flies;
From rank to rank she darts her eager eyes:
The dreadful ægis, Jove's immortal shield,
Blaz'd on her arm, and lighten'd all the field:
Round the vast orb, an hundred serpents rowl'd;
Form'd the bright fringe, and seem'd to burn in
[gold *.

will doubtless form particular notions on the sources of the sublime, which appear in the instances I have produced.

* Iliad, book ii. ver. 525.

And

And again in the fifth book,

Over her broad shoulders hangs his horrid shield,
Dire, black, tremendous! round the margin roll'd.
A fringe of serpents, hissing, guards the gold :
Here all the terrors of grim war appear,
Here rages force, here tremble flight and fear,
Here storm'd contention, and here fury frown'd,
And the dire orb portentous Gorgon crown'd.

There is scarce any description in Homer more sublime than this: Every circumstance that could add to the horror of this dreadful shield, are selected with great judgment.

I hardly know any passage more truly sublime than that noble description of the battle, in the Paradise Lost. In these lines are contained more species than one of the sublime; but I quote them for the *thought*, as sublimity of conception is always preferable to either *figures*, *composition*, or *expression*.

Now

Now stormy fury rose
 And clamour, such as heard in heav'n till now
 Was never; arms on armour clashing, bray'd
 Horrible discord, and the madding wheels
 Of brazen chariots rag'd; dire was the noise
 Of conflict! overhead the dismal hiss
 Of fiery darts in flaming volleys flew,
 And flying vaulted either host with fire:
 So under fiery cope together rush'd
 Both battles main, with ruinous assault
 And inextinguishable rage: all heav'n
 Resounded; and had earth been then, all earth
 Had to her center shook.

How greatly sublime is the variety
 of striking circumstances here collect-
 ed to display the horror of the battle;
 but what a thought was it, to paint the
 two armies fighting under a fiery vault
 of flaming arrows! Tasso's battle,
 though very sublime, is far inferior to
 it:

L'horror, la crudeltà la tema, il lutto
 Van d'intorno scorrendo: & in varia imago
 Vincitrice

Vincitrice la morte errar per tutto
Medresti, & andeggiar di sangue un lagio.* I

Milton's description is even greater than the celebrated one of Homer, of which Longinus speaks :

* Ἐδδρσειεν δ' ὑπενερθεν ἀναξ ἐνέραν Αἰδωνεύς.
Δείσας δ' ἐκ θρόνου ἄκτο, καὶ ταχε, μή οἱ ἐπειτα
Γαίαν ἀναρρήξειε Ποσειδάων ἐνοσιχθών,
Οἴκια δὲ θνητοῖσι καὶ ἀθανάτοισι φανεῖν,
Σμερδαλέ', εὐρωέντα, τα τε συφεῖσι θεοῖ περ.

The passage is too long to be quoted entire; but if the reader turns to it, he will find it very sublime. The Grecian critic's words on it are, "The images which Homer gives of the combat of the gods, have in them something prodigiously great and magnificent. We see in these verses the earth opened to its very center; hell ready to disclose itself; the whole machine of the world upon the

* Gierusalemme liberata, canto ix.

point to be destroyed and overturned :
 To shew that in such a conflict heaven
 and hell, all things mortal and immortal,
 the whole creation in short, was engaged
 in this battle, and all the extent of na-
 ture in danger." Pope has translated it
 tamely ; its sublimity is almost lost in
 the couplet.

Heav'n in loud thunders bids the trumpet sound,
 And wide beneath them groans the rending ground ;
 Deep in the dismal regions of the dead,
 Th'infernal monarch rear'd his horrid head,
 Leap'd from his throne, lest Neptune's arm should
 lay

His dark dominions open to the day,
 And pour in light on Pluto's dread abodes,
 Abhorr'd by men, and dreadful ev'n to gods.

The thought of millions of flaming
 swords lighting all hell with their blaze,
 is amazingly great :

He spake : and to confirm his words out flew
 Millions of flaming swords, drawn from the thighs
 of

Of mighty cherubim; the sudden blaze
 Far round illumin'd hell: highly they rag'd
 Against the highest, and fierce with grasped arms
 Clash'd on their sounding shields the din of war,
 Hurling defiance tow'rd the vault of heav'n.

There is a certain majesty of composition in these lines that is very striking; the versification is wrought up to a fine climax of pompous numbers.

Dr. Young describes the destruction of the world with all the horrible circumstances that could be collected. It is as sublime as any piece of fine poetry can be, when clogged with the barbarous shackle of rhyme.

The fatal period, the great hour is come,
 And nature shrinks at her approaching doom;
 Loud peals of thunder give the sign, and all
 Heav'n's terrors in array surround the ball;
 Sharp light'nings with the meteor's blaze conspire,
 And, darted downward, set the world on fire;
Black

Black rising clouds the thicken'd ether choke,
 And spiry flames dart thro' the rolling smoke,
 With keen vibrations cut the sullen night,
 And strike the darken'd sky with dreadful light ;
 From heav'n's four regions, with immortal force,
 Angels drive on the wind's impetuous course
 T'engage the flame: it spreads, it soars on high,
 Swells in the storm, and billows thro' the sky .
 Here winding pyramids of fire ascend,
 Cities and desarts in one ruin blend;
 Here blazing volumes wafted, overwhelm
 The spacious face of a far distant realm;
 There, undermin'd, down rush eternal hills,
 The neighb'ring vales the vast destruction fills.

Grandeur of conception is not confined
 to poetry, though its greatest excellency.
 I have already quoted Herodotus ; and
 the following instance from Mr. Addison
 displays a very fine imagination :

By *greatness*, I do not only mean the bulk of
 any single object, but the largeness of a whole
 view, considered as one entire piece. Such are
 the prospects of an open champaign country,
 a vast uncultivated desert, of huge heaps of

mountains, high rocks and precipices, or a wide expanse of water; where we are not struck with the novelty or beauty of the sight, but with that rude kind of magnificence which appears in many of these stupendous works of nature. Our imagination loves to be filled with an object, or to grasp at any thing that is too big for its capacity. We are flung into a pleasing astonishment at such unbounded views, and feel a delightful stillness and amazement in the soul at the apprehensions of them †.

Here we have elevation of thought to a great degree, magnificence of words, and an harmonious, lively, and animated turn of expression; or, according to M. de la Motte's definition of the sublime, it is the new and the true united in a grand idea, and expressed with elegance and brevity. This passage will bear the most critical examination, and will, I believe, be found truly sublime.

† Spectator, vol. vi. No. 412.

One more example I must be permitted to quote from the same essay :
It is found in the 420th paper :

But when we survey the whole earth at once, and the several planets that lie within its neighbourhood, we are filled with a pleasing astonishment, to see so many worlds hanging one above another, and sliding round their axles in such an amazing pomp and solemnity ! If, after this, we contemplate those wild fields of ether, that reach in height as far as from Saturn to the fixed stars, and run abroad almost to an infinitude, our imagination finds its capacity filled with so immense a prospect, and puts itself upon the stretch to comprehend it. But if we yet rise higher, and consider the fixed stars as so many vast oceans of flame, that are each of them attended with a different set of planets, and still discover new firmaments and new lights, that are sunk further in those unfathomable depths of ether, so as not to be seen by the strongest of our telescopes, we are lost in such a labyrinth of suns and worlds, and confounded with the immensity and magnificence of nature.

These are truly sublime ideas; and, let me add, the style is finely adapted to so solemn and noble a subject; the flow of the words is majestic and harmonious.

The following extract from Shakespear is of a different nature, but displays a vast extent of imagination :

Aye ! but to die, and go we know not where ;
 To lie in cold obstruction, and to rot ;
 This sensible warm motion to become
 A kneaded clod ; and the delighted spirit
 To bathe in fiery floods, or to reside
 In thrilling regions of thick ribbed ice ;
 To be imprison'd in the viewless winds,
 And blown with restless violence round about
 The pendent world †.

There

† Measure for Measure, Works, vol. i. p. 336.

We are seldom able to fasten an imitation, with certainty, on such a writer as Shakespear. Sometimes we are, but never to so much advantage as when he happens to forget himself in this respect, the representation of certain tenets,
 different

There is something extremely awful and sublime in this passage, notwithstanding the false notions it contains; what infinite expression is there in *brilliant regions of thick ribbed ice!*

A strong imagination is scarcely bounded in its flights by the universe itself: The following passage, from Dr. Aken-side, describes the field of fancy with the

different from those which prevail in a writer's country or time. Thus in the above speech of Claudio's, it is plain that the sentiments are not those which any man entertained of death in the writer's age, or in that of the speaker. We see in this passage a mixture of christian and pagan ideas; all of them very susceptible of poetical ornament, and conducive to the argument of the scene; but such as Shakespear had never dreamt of, but for Virgil's Platonic hell, where we read,

Alia panduntur inanes
Suspensæ ad ventos; aliis sub gurgite vasto
Infectum eluitur scelus, aut exuritur igni.

Letter to Mr. Mason.

G 3 fame

same force of invention as Shakespear did
the regions of the damned.

Tir'd of earth,

And this diurnal scene, she springs aloft
Thro' fields of air, pursues the flying storm,
Rides on the volley'd lightning thro' the heav'ns,
Or, yok'd with whirlwinds and the northern blast,
Sweeps the long tract of day. Then high she soars
'The blue profound, and hov'ring o'er the sun,
Beholds him pouring the redundant stream
Of light ; beholds his unrelenting sway
Bend the reluctant planets to absolve
The fated rounds of time. Thence far effus'd,
She darts her swiftness up the long career
Of devious comets ; thro' its burning signs
Exulting circles the perennial wheel
Of nature, *and looks back on all the stars,*
Whose blended light, as with a milky zone,
Invests the orient †.

In a passage in Dr. Young's Last Day
is another vast idea, which is truly sublime :

Again the trumpet's intermitted sound
Rolls the wide circuit of creation round,

† Pleasures of Imagination.

An

An universal concourse to prepare
 Of all that ever breath'd the vital air;
 In some wide field, which active whirlwinds sweep,
 Drive cities, forests, mountains to the deep,
 To smooth and lengthen out th'unbounded space,
 And spread an area for all human race.

The thought of whirlwinds driving the
 whole earth from its foundations, to spread
 that immense area, is greatly conceived.

After these instances which I have
 quoted from several ancient and modern
 authors, the reader, I apprehend, will
 not be displeased with a few from the
 sacred writings; writings not read so
 much as they deserve, if only on account
 of their beauties, considered merely as
 pieces of composition. With what ma-
 jesty does David every where describe the
 Deity, perhaps equally sublime.

Then the earth shook and trembled, the foun-
 dations also of the hills moved, and were shaken,

because he was wroth: There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured: Coals were kindled by it. He bowed the heavens also, and came down, and darkness was under his feet. And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly, and came flying upon the wings of the wind †.

What can be more sublime than the magnificent images that are here brought together; the immensity of the idea of the Almighty is here expressed in a more noble manner than when Homer described his Jupiter. There is another passage in the Psalms extremely sublime:

The waters saw thee, O God, the waters saw thee, and were afraid; the depths also were troubled. The clouds poured out water, the air thundered, and thine arrows went abroad. The voice of thy thunder was heard round about; the lightnings shone upon the ground; the earth was moved, and shook withal. Thy way is in the sea, and thy paths in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known*.

† Ps. xviii. 7—10. * Ps. lxxvii. 16—19.

The

The repetition of the words *the waters saw thee*, throws an air of grandeur over the whole passage: what a combination of images is here collected together; the air thundered, thine arrows went abroad, the lightning shining, the sea, and the great waters. In another place, the presence of God is described in very magnificent terms:

O God, when thou wentest forth before thy people, when thou didst march through the wilderness. Selah. The earth shook, the heavens also dropped at the presence of God: even Sinai itself was moved at the presence of God, the God of Israel †.

These passages all breathe the true spirit of the sublime: But the CIVth Psalm (the finest in the collection) is wonderfully pompous and expressive. The exordium of it,

Praise the Lord, O my soul!

† Psalm lxxviii. 7, 8.

is

is a very noble opening ; but he goes on in a glorious spirit of poetry :

○ Lord my God, thou art become exceeding glorious ; thou art cloathed with majesty and honour. Thou deckest thyself with light as it were with a garment ; and spreadest out the heavens like a curtain.

The magnificence of these vast ideas will not appear fully to a moderate imagination. David paints the Almighty in all his glory ; and clothes him, with what ? With flames of fire, and the most dazzling effulgent brightness. The heavens themselves form his pavilions : To *spread forth the heavens !* never was expression more sublime !

Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters, and maketh the clouds his chariot ; and walketh upon the wings of the wind. He maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flaming fire.

With what grandeur of conception, and pomp of expression, is the presence of
the.

the Deity described ! His chambers are laid on the immense waters ; the clouds serve him for a chariot ; he mounts upon the wings of the wind, which fly in obedience to its Lord : What sublime painting is this ! Tempests and flames of fire are his ministers !

He laid the foundations of the earth ; that it should not move from time to time. Thou coveredst it with the deep as with a garment : The waters stand in the hills. At thy rebuke they flee ; at the voice of thy thunder they are afraid.

It would be endless to point out every beauty in this noble composition. *Covering the earth with the deep as with a garment ; the waters flying at the voice of the Almighty's thunder :* these are noble thoughts, expressed with the greatest energy. But the whole Psalm is one continued piece of the sublime ; and the conclusion full of the finest enthusiasm.

II. The

II. The sublime is very frequently the result (as Longinus has observed) of a skillful Application of Figures. It would be endless to specify every species of them; but in many passages of the works of great authors, the sublime appears principally in them, not as a secondary, but the chief excellence.

In some of the quotations already made, in the article of Grandeur of Conception, the application of figures is very striking; but it suited the division of the subject better, to introduce them rather on account of the *thoughts*, as a superior excellency. Yet many other passages may be found, in which the figures constitute the sublime. It is almost impossible always to rank each quotation precisely under its proper head; but the exactness necessary to display the several sources of the sublime is easily attained.

Milton's

Milton's description of Satan is a noble instance of the sublimity of figures :

He above the rest,
In shape and gesture proudly eminent,
Stood like a tow'r : his form had not yet lost
All her original brightness, nor appear'd
Less than archangel ruin'd, and th'excess
Of glory obscur'd ; as when the sun, new risen,
Looks thro' the horizontal misty air
Shorn of his beams ; or from behind the moon,
In dim eclipse, disastrous twilight sheds
On half the nations, and with fear of change
Perplexes monarchs.

These metaphors convey the strongest idea imaginable, and elevate the description wonderfully. The imagery in that celebrated passage of Euripides is amazingly striking :

ὦ μητ'ερ, ἰκέλεύω σε μὴ πισεῖέ μοι
τὰς αἰμαλώπας, καὶ δρακονώδεις κόρας·
αὗται γὰρ, αὗται πλεῖστον θρώσκεισι με.

Καὲ,

Καὶ.

Οἱμοι, κλαεῖ με ποῖ φύγε* :

The poet here, says Longinus, actually saw the Furies with the eyes of his imagination, and has compelled his audience to see what he beheld himself. Dryden, in his Music Ode, has wrought up an image of fury equal to this of Euripides. The passage is so extremely beautiful, that it needs no apology for increasing the number of quotations, which

* Iph. Taur. ver. 408.

Pity thy offspring, mother, nor provoke
Those vengeful furies to torment thy son.
What horrid sights! how glare their bloody eyes!
How twisting snakes curl round their venom'd
heads!

In deadly wrath the hissing monsters rise,
Forward they spring, dart out, and leap around.
Eurip. Orest. ver. 255.

And again,

Alas! — she'll kill me! — whither shall I fly.

Ib. Iph. Taur. ver. 408.

are

are so necessary in a work of this nature.

Revenge ! Revenge ! Timotheus cries,
 See the Furies arise !
 See the snakes that they rear,
 How they hiss in their hair,
 And the sparkles that flash from their eyes !
 Behold a ghastly band,
 Each a torch in his hand !
 They are Grecian ghosts, that in battle were slain,
 And unbury'd remain,
 Inglorious on the plain.
 Give the vengeance due
 To the valiant crew :
 Behold how they toss their torches on high,
 How they point to the Persian abodes,
 And glitt'ring temples of their hostile gods !
 The princes applaud with a furious joy,
 And the king seiz'd a flambeau with zeal to destroy.
 Thais led the way,
 To light him to his prey ;
 And, like another Helen, fir'd another Troy.

No description was ever more picturesque, animated, or sublime; the imagery strong

strong and expressive, and places before our eyes the very action, painted in so wonderful a manner, that the imagination of Dryden must have been elevated to a great degree when it produced this noble stanza. Nothing in Euripides excels it. Such striking images, when expressed with such energy, must ever contain the true sublime. In Pope's *Eloisa* and *Abelard* we have another very fine instance :

But o'er the twilight groves and dusky caves,
 Long sounding iles, and intermingled graves,
 Black Melancholy sits, and round her throws
 A death-like silence and a dead repose ;
 Her gloomy presence saddens all the scene,
 Shades ev'ry flow'r, and darkens ev'ry green,
 Deepens the murmur of the falling floods,
 And breathes a browner horror on the woods.

Mr. Warton celebrates these lines greatly : “ The figurative expressions (*says he*) *throws*, and *breathes*, and *browner*,
horror,

horror, are, I verily believe, the strongest and boldest in the English language.” This panegyric is too exaggerated: the expressions are certainly striking, but in the instances of the sublime which the reader will find even in this section, more expressive ones, I apprehend, are to be discovered. The image of the goddess Melancholy sitting over the convent, and, as it were, expanding her dreadful wings over its whole circuit, and diffusing its gloom all around it, is truly sublime and strongly conceived. The following is a very fine instance of the same nature:

’Tis Fancy, in her fiery car,
 Transports me to the thickest war,
 There whirls me o’er the hills of slain,
 Where Tumult and Destruction reign;
 Where, mad with pain, the wounded steed
 Tramples the dying, and the dead;
 Where giant Terror stalks around,
 With sullen joy surveys the ground,

And, pointing to th'ensanguin'd field,
Shakes his dreadful Gorgon shield*.

The image of Terror, in the last lines is strongly conceived, and has a striking effect. That of Oblivion, in the following passage, is also sublime :

a nodding dome

[O'ergrown with moss, is now all Virgil's tomb :
'Twas such a scene as gave a kind relief
To memory, in sweetly pensive grief :
Gloomy, unpleasing images it wrought ;
No musing, soft complacency of thought :
For time had canker'd all, and worn away
Ev'n the last mournful graces of decay :
Oblivion, hateful goddess, sat before,
And cover'd with her dusky wings the door †.

These lines are full of beauties ; their movement is slow and solemn, and *the last mournful graces of decay*, a fine expression.

* Warton's Ode to Fancy. See Doddsley, vol. iii. p. 112.

† Virgil's Tomb. Doddsley, vol. iv. p. 111.

I hardly

I hardly any where know a finer apostrophe than the following, in Mr. Pope's Moral Essays :

Blush, grandeur, blush! proud courts withdraw
your blaze!
Ye little stars, hide your diminish'd rays.

These two lines are extremely sublime and beautiful: it is well known they are an abrupt address to greatness, after mentioning the celebrated Man of Ross. The thought is equal to the magnificence of the words, which are truly great and pleasing: What a noble effect has the metaphor in the last line; it throws a lustre over the whole passage*.

* Tasso has a fine thought on the superiority of virtue to greatness.

I gradi primi
Pui meritar, che conseguir desio:
No pur che me la mia virtu sublimi,
Di setttri altezza invidiar degg'io,

Of a different nature, but far more sublime, is Shakespear's description of a tempest; what striking images he places before us; with what fertility of invention has he collected a variety of circumstances and expressive figures, to make us *feel* this dreadful storm!

Kent. Where's the king?

Gent. Contending with the fretful elements:

Bids the wind blow the earth into the sea,

Or swell the curled waters 'bove the main,

That things might change or cease: tears his
white hair

(Which the impetuous blasts, with eyeless rage,
Catch in their fury, and make nothing of.)

Strives, in his little world of man, t'out-scorn

The to and fro conflicting wind and rain.

This night, wherein the cub-drawn bear would
couch,

The lion and the belly-pinched wolf

Keep their fur dry*.

These lines are very fine and picturesque, but greatly heightened by what

* King Lear, act III. scene I.

follows.

follows soon after, where Lear enters, and
says,

Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks; rage, blow!
You cataracts; and hurricanoes, spout
Till you've drench'd our steeples, drown'd the cocks!
Vaunt-couriers of oak-cleaving thunder-bolts,
Singe my white head. And thou, all-shaking
thunder,
Strike flat the thick rotundity o'th' world,
Crack nature's mould, all germins spill at once
That make ingrateful man.

What a striking and bold description
is here raised by a combination of expres-
sive images? One cannot read these lines
without fancying we are in the midst of
the storm. The abrupt address, *and thou
all-shaking thunder!* is peculiarly great,
and sublime. Still the tempest increases
with the description :

Kent. Alas, Sir, are you here? things that love
night,
Love not such nights as these: the wrathful skies
Gallow the very wand'ers of the dark,

And make them keep their caves; Since I was man,
Such sheets of fire, such bursts of horrid thunder,
Such groans of roaring wind and rain, I never
Remember to have heard. Man's nature cannot
carry

Th'affliction, nor the force.

It will not be amiss to transcribe here
that noble description of a tempest in
the Iliad :

Ἐν δ' ἔπεσ' ὥς ὅτε κύμα δοῖν ἐν νηὶ πείσῃσι
Λάβρον ὑπὸ νεφέων ἀνεμόσφρεες, ἥ δ' ἔτε πᾶσα
Ἀχὴν ὑπεκρύβθη, ἀνέμοιο δὲ δεινὸς αἴτης
Ἰσὶν ἐμβρέμεται, τρομέουσι δ' ἑτε φρενα ναῦται
Δειδίσκτες, τυτθὸν γὰρ ὑπ' ἐκ θάνατοιο φερόνται.

The poet, in these lines, paints the sailors
in a most desperate situation, while they
are only not swallowed up in every wave,
and have death before their eyes as fast
as they escape it. Nay more, the danger
is discerned in the very hurry and confu-
sion of the words; the verses are tossed
up and down with the ship; the harsh-
ness

tion of striking figures renders the following description of a battle very sublime. Several circumstances which speak strongly the horror of a battle are selected and figuratively expressed in a very bold manner.

“ Chief mixed his stroke with chief, and man with man; steel clanging, sounded on steel; helmets are cleft on high. Blood bursts and smoaks around.—Strings murmur on the polished yews. Darts rush along the sky. Spears fall like the circles of light that gild the stormy face of night*.

There

* Fingal, book ii. p. 12.—It is amazing, that it should ever be a moment doubted whether Fingal was genuine or not. Had Mr. M'Pherson published it for his own, these very critics who now endeavour to prove it a modern production, would then have been among the first to detect so manifest a plagiarism. Not one image, not a single metaphor in the whole poem, but what are drawn from natural objects which abound in the scene of the piece; no marks of an enlightened age, but every where the plainest and most simple ideas are expressed in the most natural manner,

There is something very awful and sublime in the following comparison:

They stretch their shields like the darkened moon, the daughter of the starry skies, when she moves a dun circle through heaven.

And in another place :

Let me awake the king of Moren, he that smiles in danger, for he is like the sun of heaven that rises in a storm.

The sublime is very apparent in all these passages, and results from the skillful manner in which some of the boldest figures in the world are introduced.

III. The sublime results very often from a lively and animated Painting of the Passions, which always speaks the hand of a great genius.

manner, to men who lived in those early ages, in the infancy of the arts and sciences. The inventor of such a poem at present, would be an absolute prodigy.

There

There are many instances of the finest and most exquisitely natural representation of the passions, which display a vast extent of fancy and rapidity of conception, but which some would consider rather as natural than sublime. The sublime they suppose to depend, in some measure, on a certain dignity and grandeur, either of conception or composition, without which it cannot exist; and this opinion certainly agrees with the most received notions at present; Longinus however (and it requires great confidence to doubt his authority) has quoted the following ode of Sappho, as a perfect instance of the sublime.

Φαίνεται μοι κνρς ἴσος θεοῖσιν·
 Ἐμμεν' ὦνῆς ὅσις ἐναντίος τοι
 Ἰζάνει, καὶ πλάσιον αὐτὸ φανέ-
 σας ὑπακύνει,
 Καὶ γελαῖς ἡμερόεν· τό μοι τὰν
 καρδίαν ἐν στήθεσιν ἐπῆρασεν,
 Ὡς γὰρ εἶδω σε, βροχέως με φωνᾷ
 Οὐδ' ἐν ἐτ' εἴκετ'

Ἀλλὰ καρμὴν γλῶσσα ἔαγ'· λήϊον δὲ
 αὐτίκα χρῶ πῦρ ὑπὸ δέδρομα κεῖν
 Ὀρμάτεσσιν δ' ἔδην ὄρημ' ἐπὶ ῥο-
 βευσι δ' αἶκε.

Καθ' ὃν ἰδρῶς ψυχρὸς χέεται, τρόμος δὲ
Πᾶσαν αἰρεῖ· χλωροβέρρα δὲ ποίας
Ἐμρί· ταθνάκην δ' ὀλίγω ἔπιδευσεν
Φαινομαι ἄπνους.

Ἀλλὰ πᾶν τολμάτον, ἐπεὶ πένητα*.

“As there are no subjects, says Longinus, which are not attended by some.

* Blest as th'immortal gods is he,
The youth who fondly sits by thee,
And hears and sees thee all the while
Softly speak and sweetly smile.
'Twas this depriv'd my soul of rest,
And rais'd such tumults in my breast;
For while I gaz'd, in transport tost,
My breath was gone, my voice was lost.

My bosom glow'd, the subtle flame
Ran quick thro' all my vital frame ;
O'er my dim eyes a darkness hung,
My ears with hollow murmurs rung.
In dewy damps my limbs were chill'd,
My blood with gentle horror thrill'd,
My feeble pulse forgot to play,
I fainted, sunk, and dy'd away.

adherent

adherent circumstances, an accurate and judicious choice of the most suitable of these circumstances, and an ingenious and skilful connection of them into one body, must necessarily produce the sublime. For what by the judicious choice, and ~~what~~ by the skilful connection, they cannot but very much affect the imagination. Sappho is an instance of this, who, having observed the anxieties and tortures inseparable to jealous love, has collected and displayed them all with the most lively exactness. But in what particular has she shewn her excellence? In selecting those circumstances which best suit with her subject, and afterwards connecting them together with so much art. If the collecting such circumstances in the manner Sappho has done, speaking of love, be the true sublime; an accurate description of the effects of any other passion (of
the

the graver kind) must also have the same excellency. Shakespear has a most admirable passage, which paints to the life the horror, fear, remorse, and anguish of a guilty conscience : Macbeth, before he commits the horrid deed, is terrified with imaginary appearances :

Is this a dagger which I see before me,
The handle tow'rd my hand ? Come, let me clutch
thee ;

I have thee not, and yet I see thee still :
Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible
To feeling, as to sight ? or art thou but
A dagger of the mind, a false creation,
Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain ?
I see thee yet, in form as palpable
As this which now I draw. —

Thou marshal'st me the way that I was going,
And such an instrument I was to use.
Mine eyes are made the fools of th'other senses ;
Or else worth all the rest — I see thee still,
And on thy blade and dudgeon, gouts of blood,
Which was not so before. — There's no such thing —
It is the bloody bus'ness which informs
Thus to mine eyes —

This.

This is wonderfully natural. When He has committed the murder, he enters again :

Who's there ? — What ho !

Lady. Alack ! I am afraid they have awak'd,
And 'tis not done ; th'attempt, and not the deed,
Confounds us—hark !—I laid their daggers ready,
He could not miss 'em. — Had he not resembled
My father as he slept, I had don't—My husband !

Macb. I've done the deed — didst thou not hear
a voice ?

Lady. I heard the owl scream, and the crickets cry.
Did not you speak ?

Macb. When ?

Lady. Now.

Macb. As I descended ?

Lady. Ay.

Macb. Hark !—who lies i'th' second chamber ?

Lady. Donalbain.

Macb. This is a sorry sight ! [*looks on his hands.*

The whole scene is equally fine and natural : it certainly contains that variety of adherent circumstances which Longinus mentions ; in the whole range of
poetry,

poetry, a more natural and exquisite painting of the passions is not to be met with : every circumstance suitable to the occasion is selected, and applied with the utmost art. If Sappho's ode is sublime, this passage of Shakespear's is truly so. In Romeo and Juliet there is another, in which the most violent passions of the soul are expressed in a single line; Balthasar tells Romeo of Juliet's death, he cries out,

Is it even so? then I defy you, stars!

There are many celebrated pictures that display a vast imagination in the delineation of passion, particularly that species of which I am at present speaking, the connection of various circumstances. I hardly know a piece which displays the sublime in painting better than the transfiguration of our Saviour by Raphael.

That excellence in painting which may be called the sublime, is a certain perfection resulting from several causes; it may sometimes be found in a single head; in some pictures it will arise from the thought; in others, from the expression: An animated and glowing expression of a subject not trivial, will in painting be truly sublime. In a few pieces we find a great number of excellencies united, which, like the poetry of Milton, bears the stamp of the most sublime genius.

The transfiguration of our Saviour by Raphael, is of this last rank; a piece second to none in the world, but rather the very supreme boast of painting itself. The subject, divested of episodes, would have admitted but very few figures; Raphael, however, by his admirable management,

agement, has introduced seven and twenty, all so well placed, that, except three or four, one sees them all entirely; contrary to the common custom of painters, who, either to avoid work, or that they know not how to disengage a multitude of figures one from another in the same picture, present us with a great many heads behind some persons who are painted at their full length in the front; but here every thing is free and disengaged, and the figures so judiciously ranged, that one sees them all alike, without any confusion, or one hiding or covering another*. An afflicted mother, accompanied with a parent and some Jews, come to present to Jesus Christ, her son who was possessed, that he might deliver him, from the wicked spirit: A strong robust man holds this infant, who is hor-

* See *Roma Illustrata*, by Samber, p. 126.

visibly agitated by the convulsions of the
 possession, with stiffened arms and eyes
 starting out of his head, and the fingers
 bent backward, tormented with the pains
 he suffers: One thinks one hears his cries,
 and is sensible of his agonies; all his
 veins are swoln, the skin of his body
 stretched after an extraordinary manner,
 his muscles tumid, and all the parts of
 his body in such a violent condition, that
 no other torment but that of possession
 could visibly throw a human body into
 the like contortions. This mother finds
 the apostles without Jesus Christ, at the
 foot of mount Thabor; she shews them the
 tortures her son suffers; all the apostles
 look with an attention full of astonish-
 ment at the convulsions of this child;
 but not believing it in their power to free
 him from the devil that possesses him,
 one of them contents himself to shew the
 mother

mother the way which their divine master had taken, who was retired to the top of that mountain, at the foot of which they attended him.

The mother shews the apostles her suffering son; the apostles, in their turn, shew to the mother the summit of the mountain, where their master is. The action of the mother carries our eyes to the apostles, and that of the apostles elevates them to Jesus Christ; and these two actions have such union one with another, that the design of the picture is discovered at once, and the history also comprised in one view. The management of the subject is admirable, but the several figures all display the most poetic pencil. The heads of the apostles, and of the Jews that came along with the mother, which have all airs so different,

appear to be more and more animated, the longer one looks at them ; we believe ourselves really present at the very action, and that we see a real mountain in size and colour ; that we are actually at its foot with the mother of the possessed child ; we look up as she does towards the summit of mount Thabor, where the Son of God appears with so shining a whiteness as enlightens the whole picture, and by the splendor of which we see Jesus Christ full of a majesty peculiar to a divinity ; a splendor so brilliant and so lively, that the top of the mountain, which is all illuminated, makes the bottom appear to lie in a kind of darkness and obscurity.

Christ hangs in the air self-suspended, in the triumphant attitude of a God ; Moses and Elias, who are on each side,

shine

shine also with a very great splendor, but which yet appears as a reflection from that of their Lord; and though their suspension in the air has an attitude which displays victory and triumph, Raphael knew so well to join with it such modesty, that they always appear two creatures penetrated with the veneration of their Creator and God, whom they adore with sentiments of the most profound humility, even in their triumphant suspension.

The three apostles, who went up with Jesus Christ to the top of mount Thabor, seeing him environed with so great a splendor, and cloathed with so much majesty, remain equally dazzled and astonished; and though the attitude of all three are very different, it would be a very difficult matter to say which expresses most the amazement and surprize such a spectacle produces.

Never was there a better figure than the woman, who brings her son ; it is one of those bodies so divinely well designed, by which one ever knows the great Raphael. One of these bodies, the colours of which are so graceful and delicate, has the elegance of a natural beauty which enchants, on which side soever he represents it to us : this which is turned, makes us see a shape the most free and easy, and the most noble that could be figured. The art of the painter is admirable in the expression, by which he has shewn in a manner so sensible the elevation of Jesus Christ, in respect to those three apostles on the mountain ; for though there is only one foot distance between him and them, he seems to touch the empyreum, and that the summit of the mountain where they are, in relation to him, seems a profound abyss, where
 he

he leaves them infinitely lower than himself ; the firm and elevated attitude of Christ, and the prostration of his apostles, one of whom has his body extended almost at its full length upon the ground, produce this effect ; and this is what no painter ever yet knew how to imitate in any of the copies that I have seen made of this piece.

In a word, this admirable picture is full of the most striking beauties ; the figure of our Saviour alone, his attitude, and the vast expression in his countenance, are truly sublime ; the group at the bottom of the mountain displays the greatest variety of perfect design ; the airs of the heads, the expression of their several emotions at seeing the possessed son, the whole composition and poetry of the piece, are wonderfully sublime.

The Last Judgment of Michael Angelo is one of the sublimest pictures in the world; never was a picture painted with a more severe or terrible gusto. It is the most stupendous painting in Europe, and displays the most immense variety of figures and postures imaginable, the noblest designs, the airs of the heads beautiful and full of fire. The light of this piece is wonderful; after the destruction of the earth, the sun, and the stars, &c. It would have been wrong to represent a light like that of our day: Michael Angelo has invented a mixture of half clear and half obscure, of white and blue, which has such an effect as can scarcely be conceived. In short, this piece, which is one of the first in the world, is a fine instance of the terrible sublime in painting.

The

The display of various passions in a group of figures is seen very strongly in that cartoon at Hampton Court, where Jesus Christ confirms to St. Peter the power of the keys, in the presence of the apostles : It is one of those tapestry pieces on the Acts of the Apostles, which pope Leo X. ordered to be made for the chapel of Sixtus IV. St. Peter, holding the keys in his hands, is on his knees before Jesus Christ, and seems penetrated with an emotion conformable to his situation ; his gratitude and zeal for his master are visibly painted on his countenance. St. John the Evangelist is drawn in the form and attitude of a young man, as he was at that time : he seems to consent, with a motion of frankness quite natural to his age, the worthy choice which his master had made ; a choice which it visibly appears he would have made

made himself; so beautifully is the vivacity of his approbation marked by the air of his countenance and the eager movement of his body. The apostle next to him seems more advanced in years, and shews the physiognomy and countenance of a sedate man; wherefore, agreeably to his character, he approves of the choice by a plain motion of the arms, and a nod of the head. At the furthest end of the group one may distinguish a sanguine and choleric man; he has a very fresh countenance, a reddish beard, a large forehead, a flat nose, and all the features of a supercilious person; He looks therefore with an air of disdain, and with a contracted brow, on a preference which it is easy to perceive he thinks unjust. Men of his temperament are very ready to fancy themselves not inferior to their neighbours. Next to him

him is placed another apostle, confided in his countenance; whose melancholy complexion is easily discerned by a pale-meagre face, a black broad beard, by the habit of his body, and in short by all the strokes which naturalists assign generally to this complexion: he stoops, and fixing his eyes on Jesus Christ, seems to be devoured with a black jealousy, for a choice which he is not going to object against, although he is likely to retain a spirit of resentment for it a long time: in fine, it is as easy to distinguish Judas in this figure, as if one were to see him hanged to a fig-tree with a purse about his neck*. There is nothing which oftener captivates:

* *Réflexions Critiques*, par du Bos, tome i. § 13. He gives another instance, which I shall quote in his own words: Speaking of Raphael, he says — *Je doute même qu'il soit possible de pousser l'invention poétique plus loin que ce grand peintre*
l'a

• cultivates in painting, at first sight,
 • than a brilliant thought thrown into an
 • allegory;

l'a fait dans les tableaux de son bon tems. Une autre pièce de la même tenture représente St. Paul annonçant aux Atheniens ce Dieu auquel ils avoient dressé un autel sans le connoître ; & Raphael a fait de l'auditoire de cet apôtre un chef-d'œuvre de poésie, en se tenant dans les bornes de la vraisemblance la plus exacte. Un Cynique appuyé sur son bâton, & qu'on reconnoît pour tel à l'effronterie & aux haillons qui faisoient la caractéristique de la secte de Diogene, regarde St. Paul avec impudence. Un autre philosophe qu'on juge à son air de tête un homme ferme & même obstiné, a le menton sur sa poitrine ; il est absorbé dans des réflexions sur les merveilles qu'il entend, & l'on croit s'appercevoir qu'il passe dans ce moment-là de l'ébranlement à la persuasion. Un autre a la tête penchée sur l'épaule droite, & il regarde l'apôtre avec une admiration pure, qui ne paroît pas encore accompagnée d'aucun autre sentiment. Un autre porte le second doigt de sa main droite sur son nez, & fait le geste d'un homme qui vient d'être enfin éclairé sur des vérités dont il avoit depuis long-tems une lumière confuse. Le peintre oppose à ces philosophes des jeunes gens & des femmes qui marquent leur étonnement

allegory; yet few contain the true subline. There is a very fine thought which the abbé du Bos speaks of, and which deserves here to be quoted: " I cannot recollect, says he, more than one composition merely allegorical, that can be cited as a model, and which even Poussin and Raphael (if I may be allowed to judge of their sentiments by their works) would have been willing to have adopted. It is impossible to imagine anything more complete in its kind than this idea, so elegant in its simplicity, and so sublime

nement & leur émotion par des gestes convenables à leur âge comme à leur sexe. Le chagrin est peint sur le visage d'un homme vêtu comme il pouvoient être alors chez les Juifs les gens de la loi. Le succès de la prédication de St. Paul devoit produire un pareil effet sur un Juif obstiné. La crainte d'être ennuyeux m'empêche de parler d'avantage des personnages de ce tableau, mais il n'en est aucun qui ne rende compte très-intelligiblement de ses sentimens au spectateur attentif.

Tome i. § 13.

by

by its agreement with the plate for which it was designed. This famous composition was the invention of the late prince of Condé*, a prince of as bright a conception, and as lively an imagination, as any person in his time.

“ The prince here mentioned caused the history of his father, commonly known in Europe by the name of the Great Condé, to be painted in the gallery of Chantilly. There was one difficulty which lay in his way in the execution of his project: The hero in his youth had been engaged in the interest of the enemies of our government, and had performed part of his great exploits when he bore arms against his country; it might be therefore naturally expected, that there should be no parade made of those achievements

* Henry Julius.

in the gallery of Chantilly. On the other hand, some of those very actions, as his succouring the town of Cambray, and his retreat from before Arras, were such illustrious feats of war, that it must have been a great mortification to a son so fond of his father's glory, to suppress them in a kind of temple which he was going to erect to the memory of this hero. The ancients would have said, that piety itself had inspired him with the method of perpetuating the memory of those great actions, whilst he made a shew of concealing them. He ordered therefore Clio, the historical Muse, an allegorical but well-known personage, to be drawn with a book in her hand, on the back of which there was the following title, *The Life of Prince Condé*; with the other hand she was tearing some leaves out of the book, which, as fast as she

ture, she hung upon the ground; on the scattered leaves one might read, *The Relief of Cambray, The Succour of Valenciennes, The Retreat from before Arras*, in short, the title of almost all the great actions of the prince of Condé during his stay in the Spanish Netherlands; actions in which every thing was commendable but the cause in which he performed them. Unfortunately this piece was not executed pursuant to so ingenious and so simple an idea: The prince, who had conceived so noble a design, shewed on this occasion an excess of complaisance for the art, by giving the painter leave to alter the elegance and simplicity of his thought, by figures which add only to the composition of the piece, without making it say any more than what had been expressed already in so sublime a manner*.

* This is of a different cast from another piece drawn for the Dominicans. "Christ advances from

IV. There is a certain weight and dignity of composition which often includes, the sublime; but as a trivial thought, although dressed up in the most pompous manner, can never be truly great, this species of the sublime must arise from the united effect of the thought and language, when the first is not so eminently striking as to deserve being ranked under the article of grandeur of conception.

from betwixt the other two persons of the Trinity, as if he were going to execute the sentence of damnation, which he had just before pronounced against the world, figured by a globe placed at the bottom of the picture: He holds a thunder-bolt in his hand, in the attitude of a fabulous Jove, and seems just ready to dart it against the world. The Virgin Mary, and several saints placed near to Christ, intercede for the world, without seeming to prevail on him to suspend his fury. But to come to the design of the picture, and to its agreement with the place where it was to be exposed, St. Dominic covers the world with his mantle and rosary.

The following instance from Mr. Pope will best explain my meaning.

Come then, my friend! my genius, come along;
 Oh master of the poet, and the song!
 And while the muse now stoops, or now ascends,
 To man's low passions, or their glorious ends,
 Teach me like thee, in various nature wise,
 To fall with dignity, with temper rise;
 Form'd by thy converse, happily to steer
 From grave to gay, from lively to severe *;
 Correct with spirit, eloquent with ease,
 Intent to reason, or polite to please.
 Oh! while along the stream of time thy name
 Expanded flies, and gathers all its fame,
 Say, shall my little bark attendant sail,
 Pursue the triumph, and partake the gale †?

When

* D'une voix legere
 Passer du grave au doux, du plaisant au severe?
 Boileau.

† Imitated from Statius:

Sic ubi magna novum Phario de littore puppis
 Solvit iter, jamque innumeros utrinque rudentes,
 Lataque veliferi porrexit brachia mali
 Invasitque vias, in eodem angusta phaselus,
 Æquore, & immensi partem sibi vindicat austri.

And

When statesmen, heroes, kings, in dust repose,
 Whose sons shall blush their fathers were thy foes,
 Shall then this verse to future age pretend
 Thou wert my guide, philosopher, and friend?
 That, urg'd by thee, I turn'd the tuneful art
 From sounds to things, from fancy to the heart;
 For wit's false mirror, held up nature's light,
 Shew'd erring pride, Whatever is, is right;
 That Reason, Passion, answer one great aim;
 That true Self-love and Social are the same;
 That Virtue only makes our bliss below;
 And all our knowledge is, Ourselves to know*.

These lines are extremely beautiful;
 but I cannot see in them all the five
 sources of the sublime mentioned by Lon-
 ginus, as Dr. Warburton asserts. Shake-
 spear speaks of the vanity of human
 grandeur with infinite dignity of style:

And again:

*Immensæ veluti connata carinæ
 Cymba minor, cum sævit hyems, pro parte, furentes
 Parva recepat aquas, & eodem voluitur aestro.*

* Essay on Man, book i.

The cloud-capt tow'rs, the gorgeous palaces,
 The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
 Yea all which it inherit, shall dissolve,
 And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
 Leave not a wreck behind.

The noble address of Satan to the Sun, in the *Paradise Lost*, is conceived with such propriety, and expressed in such an admirable manner, displaying almost the melancholy turn of his mind in the solemn movement of the lines :

O thou, that, with surpassing glory crown'd,
 Look'st from thy sole dominion like the god
 Of this new world, at whose sight all the stars
 Hide their diminish'd heads ; to thee I call,
 But with no friendly voice, and add thy name,
 O sun ! to tell thee how I hate thy beams,
 That bring to my remembrance from what state
 I fell, how glorious once above thy sphere,
 Till pride and worse ambition threw me down,
 Warring in heav'n against heav'n's matchless king*.

The poetic style in the following description of Hector engaging, is wonder-

* Book iv. ver. 32.

fully pompous and animated: Mr. Pope's translation is so noble, that I may venture to quote it for the composition :

Mars, stern destroyer ! and Bellona dread,
Flame in the front, and thunder at their head ;
This swells the tumult and the rage of fight ;
That shakes a spear, that casts a dreadful light ;
Where Hector march'd, the god of battles shin'd,
Now storm'd before him, and now rag'd behind *.

There is great dignity of composition and a vast fire of imagination displayed in Mons. Rousseau's description of the rising sun ; the passage is truly sublime.

* Iliad, book v. ver. 726. Hector, in the twelfth book, bursts open the gate at the Grecian wall, and is painted in most noble colours by Homer, entering the entrenchment :

Now rushing in, the furious chief appears
Gloomy as night, and shakes two shining spears,
A dreadful gleam from his bright armour came ;
And from his eye-balls flash'd the living flame ;
He moves a god, resistless in his course,
And seems a match for more than human force.

On le voit s'annoncer de loin par les traits de feu qu'il lance au-devant de lui. L'incendie augmente, l'orient paroît tout en flâmes : à leur éclat on attend l'astre long-tems avant qu'il se montre : à chaque instant on croit le voir paroître, on le voit enfin. Un point brillant part comme un éclair & remplit aussi-tôt tout l'espace : le voile des ténèbres s'efface & tombe : L'homme reconnoît son séjour, & le trouve embelli. La verdure a pris durant la nuit une vigueur nouvelle ; le jour naissant qui l'éclaire, les premiers rayons qui la dorant, la montrent couverte d'un brillant réseau de rosée, qui réfléchit à l'œil la lumière & les couleurs. Les oiseaux en chœur se réunissent & saluent de concert le pere de la vie ; en ce moment pas un seul ne se tait. Leur gazouillement foible encore, est plus lent & plus doux que dans le reste de la journée, il se sent de la langueur d'un paisible réveil. Le concours de tous ces objets porte aux sens une impression de fraîcheur qui semble pénétrer jusqu'à l'ame. Il y a là une demi-heure d'enchantement auquel nul homme ne résiste : un spectacle si grande, si beau, si délicieux n'en laisse aucun de sang-froid.

This description is wonderfully striking; and I cannot avoid adding a few of his succeeding remarks.

Si l

S'il n'a long-tems parcouru des plaines arides ; si des sables ardens n'ont brûlé ses pieds, si la réverbération suffoquante des rochers frappés du soleil ne l'oppressa jamais, comment goûtera-t-il l'air frais d'une belle matinée ? Comment la parfum des fleurs, le charme de la verdure, l'humide vapeur de la rosée, le marcher mol & doux sur la pelouse, enchanteront-ils ses sens ? Comment le chant des oiseaux lui causera-t-il une émotion voluptueuse, si les accens de l'amour & du plaisir lui sont encore inconnus ? Avec quels transports verra-t-il naître une si belle journée, si son imagination ne fait pas lui peindre ceux dont on peut la remplir ? Enfin comment s'attendrira-t-il sur la beauté du spectacle de la nature, s'il ignore quelle main prit soin de l'orner ?

Ne tenez point à l'enfant des discours qu'il ne peut entendre. Point de descriptions, point d'éloquence, point de figures, point de poésie. Il n'est pas maintenant question de sentiment ni de goût. Continuez d'être clair, simple & froid ; le tems ne viendra que trop tôt de prendre un autre langage*.

The

* Emile, tome ii. p. 9. The passage is so well translated, that the quotation of the English cannot be tedious.

K 4

“ There

and the thoughts in this noble description
 are full of fire; the painting is bold,
 glowing.

“ There you will see the fiery rays it scatters
 among the clouds, as harbingers of its approach.
 The illumination increases, the east seems all in
 flames, and you expect the glorious orb before it
 discovers itself. Above the horizon you think
 you see it every moment; it at length appears.
 Its rays dart like lightning o’er the face of nature,
 and darkness vanishes at the sight. Man glories
 in his habitation, and sees it embellished with new
 beauty. The lawn is refreshed by the coolness of
 the night, and the light of the moon displays its
 encreasing verdure; the dew-bespangled flowers
 that enamel its surface glitter in the sun-beams,
 and, like rubies and emeralds, dart their colours
 on the eye. The chearful birds unite in choirs,
 and hail in concert the parent of life: not one is
 silent, at this enchanting moment none are mute,
 though in feeble notes, more slow and soft than
 those they chaunt all day, as if from peaceful
 slumbers scarce awake, they join in languid har-
 mony. The assemblage of so many pleasing ob-
 jects imprints a glowing sensation that seems to
 penetrate the soul. Who can withstand the rap-
 ture of this short interval of enchantment? it is
 impossible so grand, so beautiful, so delight-
 ful

glowing, and animated ; it places the divine object full before our eyes ; the full a scene can be ever beheld with indifference.

“ If he has not travelled over deserts ; if his feet have never been parched by burning sands ; if he never hath felt the scorching sun-beams reflected from the surrounding rocks, how can he taste the fresh air of a fine morning ? How should he be enraptured with the fragrance of the flowers, the refreshing verdure of the grass, the dew-drops sparkling in the sun, or the soft carpet of the downy moss ? How should the warbling of birds inspire him with glowing raptures, who is a stranger to the soft accents of love and delight ? How can he behold with transport the dawn of so lovely a day, whose imagination cannot paint to itself the joys it is capable of bestowing ? In a word, what tender sensations can be excited by the charms of nature in him, who is ignorant by whose hand she is so beautifully adorned ? Talk not to children in a language they do not comprehend ; make use of no pompous descriptions, no flowers of speech, no tropes and figures, no poetry. Taste and sentiment are at present quite out of the question : simplicity, gravity, and precision are all that are yet required : the time will come, but too soon, when we must assume a different style.

force

force of the expressions warms the imagination, and the turn and management of the periods display all the charms of harmonious composition.

In the poem of the Last Day, the author, summing up the immense numbers who are to be judged, mentions

Those overwhelming armies, whose command
Said to one empire, *Fall*; another, *Stand*;
Whose rear lay wrap'd in night, while *Breaking*
dawn
Rous'd the broad front, and call'd the battle on.

These lines are composed with a most striking pomp and dignity of sound, and the thought in the two last lines is very noble.

V. The sublime is sometimes to be found in the Expression: When a few words, or perhaps a single bold and animated

mated one, conveys a strong idea, it strikes us with such force of eloquence that we may often justly consider it as sublime.

Milton, speaking of Adam and Eve's embracing each other, makes use of, I verily believe, the strongest and boldest expression in the English language :

IMPARADIS'D in one another's arms*.

This single word is truly sublime. Shakespear, throughout his works, perpetually uses the noblest and most striking expressions : Thus, when he speaks of the calamities to which humanity is subject, he calls them

The SLINGS and ARROWS of outrageous fortune†:

SECT.

* Paradise Lost, book iv. ver. 506.

† Hamlet's Soliloquy.—The *sublime* should always be distinguished from the *beautiful* in poetry.
The

S E C T. III.

LONGINUS, in his admirable treatise, which is rather on Perfection of Writing in general, than the Sublime in particular, ranks the pathetic as one source of the sublime. There needs no apology for throwing the few instances I shall quote, into a section by themselves, as I always conceived the sublime and pathetic to be essentially different.

That pathetic which affects on the first reading, and moves us in the most tender

The following expressions I should rank with the latter; they are amazingly fine :

Me of my lawful pleasures she restrain'd,
And pray'd me oft forbearance ; did it with
A *pudency so rose*, the sweet view on't
Might well have warm'd old Satan ; that I thought
her

As chaste as *unfurn'd snow*.

manner;

manner, generally results from the natural painting of distress: It is attended with a great effect, when the mind of an unhappy man is laid open, and all the workings of misfortune exhibited in their natural colours. Thus Lear's reflections are wonderfully pathetic, and touch our inmost soul; we feel for the poor old man, whose mind is on the verge of madness:

But where the greater malady is fix'd,
The lesser is scarce felt. Thou'dst shun a bear;
But if thy flight lay tow'rd the roaring sea,
Thou'dst meet the bear i'th' mouth. When the
mind's free,
The body's delicate; the tempest in my mind
Doth from my senses take all feeling else,
Save what beats there: Filial ingratitude!
Is it not, as this mouth should tear this hand
For lifting food to't? — But I'll punish home;
No, I will weep no more — In such a night
To shut me out? — Pour on, I will endure!
In such a night as this? O Regan! Goneril! —
Your old, kind father, whose frank heart gave all:
O, that

~~Oh, that my madams lie; let me show that;~~

No more of that.

This passage is wrought up to the highest pitch of the pathetic of any I ever read; Lear's broken reflection, his sudden transitions of thought, especially in the last lines, raise our pity in the most moving manner, and make their way immediately to the heart: but to hear Garrick repeat these lines, see them set off with all the expressive beauty of the justest action, is delightful; no scene in human nature was ever more pathetically displayed than this, when acted by that wonderful man. When Lear is tossed from one daughter to another in a storm of agony, Regan says to him,

If you'll come to me,

(For now I spy a danger) I intreat you

To bring but five and twenty; to no more

Will I give place or notice.

To

To which the old king makes that amazingly pathetic answer,

I gave you all!

When he finds what unnatural hags they both are, he falls into those pathetic starts and reflections, that move us with the utmost pity.

You see me here, you gods, a poor old man,
As full of grief as age; wretched in both!
If it be you that stir these daughters' hearts
Against their father, fool me not so much
To bear it tamely; touch me with noble anger;
O let not women's weapons, water-drops,
Stain my man's cheeks. No, you unnatural hags,
I will have such revenges on you both,
That all the world shall — I will do such things,
What they are, yet I know not; but they shall be
The terrors of the earth. You think I'll weep:
No, I'll not weep. I have full cause of weeping:
This heart shall break into a thousand flaws,
Or ere I'll weep. O fool! I shall go mad.

Never were the passions painted in a more pathetic manner: The passages I have
7 quoted

quoted are so full of those sudden ~~parts~~ of passion, those strokes which point out the distressful state of old Lear's unhappy situation, with such striking force of thought and language, that they make their way immediately to the soul.

The pathetic is frequently found in a sudden reflection, which undeceives a man, and instead of affording some happiness, or at least ease, plunges him into sudden misery: Such is Romeo's forgetting his being poisoned; he flies into raptures at Juliet's being alive, but the sudden thought gives wings to the poison, which flies to the vital part. And in Othello, when he has murdered Desdemona, Æmilia calls from within:

Yes, 'tis Æmilia — by and by — she's dead.
 'Tis like she comes to speak of Cassio's death;
 The noise was high—Ha! no more moving?
 Still as the grave. Shall she come in? were't good?
I think

I think she fears again — No — What's the best?
If she comes in, she'll sure speak to my wife :
My wife ! my wife ! what wife ? I have no wife.
Oh insupportable ! oh heavy hour !

Every start of the soul is here distinctly featured, and his sudden reflection of his having no wife, pathetic to the highest degree.

In Elfrida, after Athelwold is banished, he demands admittance of Edwin to the presence of Elfrida, to which Edwin replies,

I hold
'Tis duty to my king, and love to you,
Thus to oppose your entrance.

Athelwold then makes this pathetic transition,

What, thou traitor !
Thy pardon, Edwin, I forgot myself ;
Forgot that I stood here a banish'd man,
And that this gate was shut against its master :
And yet this gate leads to my dear Elfrida,
Can it be barr'd to me ?

When the heart struggles with those passions which are rooted in it, the miserable state of the mind gives rise to a multitude of touching reflections; but when we are forced to abandon whatever is most dear to us, and we have in a great measure ourselves been the occasion of so unhappy a situation, the pathetic then rises into the most excessive distress. We are obliged to make the sacrifice; but a million of tormenting reflections make us regret our past resolution. Thus Julie, in her last letter to her lover, discovers the melancholy situation of her mind in the pathetic conclusion.

Ici finissent les sermons de la prêchante. Elle aura désormais assez à faire à se prêcher elle-même. Adieu, mon aimable ami, adieu pour toujours; ainsi l'ordonne l'inflexible devoir : Mais croyez que le cœur de Julie ne fait point oublier ce qui lui fut cher — mon dieu ! que fais-je ? — vous le verrez trop à l'état de ce papier. Ah ! n'est-il pas

pas permis de s'attendre en disant à son ami le dernier adieu * ?

St. Preux pours out his whole soul in the conclusion of his last letter to Julie ; never was any thing more pathetic than the finishing of these two letters.

Il faut finir cette lettre. Je ne pourrois, je le sens, m'empêcher d'y reprendre un ton que vous ne devez plus entendre. Julie, il faut vous quitter ! Si jeune encore il faut déjà renoncer au bonheur ? O tems, qui ne dois plus revenir ! tems passé pour toujours, source de regrets éternels ! plaisirs, transports, douces extases, momens délicieux, ravissemens célestes ! mes amours, mes uniques amours, honneur & charme de ma vie ! adieu pour jamais.

I scarce any where know more pathetic strokes than these : When the heart melts into farewells for ever, and the whole soul is dissolved into tenderness, it is im-

* La Nouvelle Héloïse, tome ii. p. 196. Amst. edit.

possible to be proof against the effects of such lively painting.

The relation of a few melancholy thoughts and circumstances, though not considerable, frequently forms the true pathetic. Xenophon's description of an army in an hopeless situation, is of this nature.

Ταῦτα ἐννεμενοὶ, καὶ ἀθυρῶς ἐχόντες, ὀλίγοι μὲν αὖτις εἰς τὴν ἐσπεραν σίβηεν, ὀλίγοι δὲ πῦρ ἐκαύσαν, ἐπὶ δὲ τὰ ὅπλα πολλοὶ ἐκ πλὸν ταύτῃ τῇ νυκτὶ, ἀνεπαύετο δὲ οὐκ ἐβίβανεν ἕκαστος, ἢ δυνάμενοι καθυδεῖν ὑπὸ λυπῆς, καὶ πόθῳ πατρίδων, γονέων, γυναικῶν, παιδῶν, &c.

This is very pathetic ; in what a beautiful manner the hopeless condition of the army is painted, when become destitute of leaders, in the heart of the enemy's country, at a distance from all friends, and impassable mountains and rivers, betwixt them and Greece.

In

¹⁰In the eleventh Iliad, Agamemnon having slain Iphidamas, Homer adds a few most pathetic reflections :

Oh worthy better fate ! Oh early slain,
 Thy country's friend ; and virtuous, tho' in vain !
 No more the youth shall join his consort's side,
 At once a virgin, and at once a bride !
 No more with presents her embraces meet,
 Or lay the spoils of conquest at her feet,
 On whom his passion, lavish of his store,
 Bestow'd so much, and vainly promis'd more ;
 Unwept, uncover'd on the plain he lay,
 While the proud victor bore his arms away.

There cannot be a more beautiful instance of the true pathetic than Andromache's reflections on the fate of Astyanax, when she finds Hector is slain, beginning at the 620th line of the twenty-second book. And another extreme fine one is Priam's celebrated speech to Achilles, begging the body of Hector, which whole passage is amazingly beautiful.

In the *Nouvelle Héloïse*, St. Préux, after mentioning the circumstances which are advantageous to Julie, makes this transition to himself:

Mais moi, Julie, hélas! errant, sans famille, & presque sans patrie, je n'ai que vous sur la terre, & l'amour seul me tient lieu de tout*.

A single reflection in the *Odysséy* is also pathetic.

Ἀλλ' ἐμπῆ παντὶς οὐδ' ὕρομένος καὶ ἀχέων,
Πολλὰ κίς ἐν μετ' αἰοῖσι καθήμενος ἡμετέροισιν,
Ἀλλ' ἴε μὲν τέ γ' ὧ φρηνά τερπομαι, ἀλλοῖε δ' αὐτὴ
Πανομαι. αἰψὸς δ' ἐ κορὸς κρυεροῖο γούνο †.

There is striking and pathetic beauty in these four lines; Menelaus's observa-

* It is extremely well translated: "But I, alas! Eloisa, a wanderer without a family, and almost without a country, have no one but you upon earth, and am possessed of nothing, *save* my love." Vol. i. p. 63. The word *save* here, heightens the pathetic of the passage greatly.

† Book iv.

tion,

tion, that, melancholy as his reflections are, they give him pleasure even in the indulging the tribute due to the glorious dead, of a grateful tear.

Sometimes the very flow of composition forms the pathetic; when the thought is moderate, a melancholy solemnity in the lines is moving. Of this we have an instance in Pope:

Years following years, steal something ev'ry day,
At last they steal us from ourselves away;
In one our frolics, one amusements end,
In one a mistress drops, in one a friend:
This subtle thief of life, this paltry Time,
What will it leave me, if it snatch my rhyme?
If ev'ry wheel of that unweary'd mill,
That turn'd ten thousand verses, now stand still.

The pathetic may be continued in a piece to much greater length than the sublime, which requires a certain ascending series of greatness, a climax in the

thought and composition; which the utmost extent of imagination cannot surpass longer. The sixth book of the Paradise Lost continues it longer than any poem extant. But the pathetic may run in a full tide through whole volumes. Of all the books I ever read, Julie is the most pathetic. The whole story of her unsuccessful and unhappy passion is composed of so many moving circumstances, that I could never think of it without emotion. It is an almost continued thread of the true pathetic; but there are some letters more affecting than others, and which make their way more immediately to the soul. The hundred and seventy, in which Mrs. Oab relates to Julie her lover's interview with her, while ill of the small-pox, is amazingly affecting; there are so many little delicate circumstances mentioned in it, which all unite

unite to render it truly moving, that I think no breast, that is not adamant, can be proof against such a melancholy tale. The hundred and sixth, which Julie writes her lover, after requesting, by her father's orders, that he would release her from her promise, is also finely composed : We see her foul a prey to her violent love, to terror, and almost despair ; she has not the power to finish a single, single sentence ; it is full of such exclamations as a person in her unhappy situation must make ; vastly natural, and no less affecting. In the seventy-sixth, we see a different species of the pathetic, but equally admirable, after the more passionate ones ; it displays a certain calm pathetic, a dignity of distress, that must touch a feeling heart most nearly.

S E C T. IV.

A Noble metaphor (says Addison), when it is placed to an advantage, casts a kind of glory round it, and darts a lustre through a whole sentence." Nobody, I believe, will dispute the justness of this remark: Indeed metaphors and metaphorical expressions wonderfully enliven and set off any composition, either in poetry or prose, and greatly assist an author in explaining his ideas in the most striking manner. Quintilian says, that the metaphor is an image and a painting, on which we represent foreign things with colours. As the languages are more or less fruitful in furnishing terms for expressing all our thoughts, we must sometimes imprint them by resemblances.

" Rien (says the abbé de Bellegarde) n'embellit tant le discours, que le bon usage

usage des metaphores ; souvent des mots assez communs dans leur usage propre, deviennent des locutions très-élegantes, quand on les prend dans un sens métaphorique. J'ai souvent remarqué en lisant les livres des meilleurs auteurs, que ce qui attache & ce qui frappe d'avantage, ce sont certaines expressions que l'on transporte du naturel au figuré *. The true genius in poets generally displays itself in their metaphors ; for it is only a lively and unbounded imagination that sees all the relations and similitudes of an object, or action, at one glance of thought ; that distinguishes in an instant every circumstance wherein the agreement or disagreement consists : if fine similes are thinly sown in a poet's works, we may pronounce him an ordinary genius. It

* Réflexions sur l'Elegance & la Politesse du Style, p. 168.

is Homer's poems, above all others, which contain the greatest number and the most beautiful. It would be endless to quote all the instances in celebrated works of the efficacy of metaphors; but the nature of my subject requires that I should produce some that are remarkable. Nothing, as Longinus observes, moves more than several metaphors combined together; for when two or three are linked together in firm confederacy, they communicate strength, efficacy, and beauty to one another. Thus when Milton describes Satan, he strikes our imagination greatly by the force of two noble metaphors:

He, above the rest,

In shape and gesture proudly eminent,
 Stood like a tow'r; his form had yet not lost
 All her original brightness, nor appear'd
 Less than archangel ruin'd, and th'excess
 Of glory obscur'd; as when the sun new risen
 Looks thro' the horizontal misty air;

Shorn

Shew of his beams; or from behind the moon
 In dim eclipse, disastrous twilight sheds
 O'er half the nations, and with fear of change
 Perplexes monarchs*.

The beauty of this passage is greatly heightened by comparing the stature of Satan to a tower; and his clouded majesty to the rising sun looking through the misty air, and when in an eclipse. These metaphors, which are worthy the imagination of Milton, gives us a strong idea of the thing he paints; more so than forty lines could have done without their assistance.

Shakespear was a great master in all the arts of composition; we find in all his works many noble strokes of genius. He excelled in the artful use of metaphors; the following beautiful passage

* Paradise Lost, book i. ver. 590.

is an instance, not only of a metaphor well applied, but of a metaphorical expression and expressive epithets. In his Twelfth Night, the Duke asks Viola in disguise, her pretended sister's story; she answers,

A blank, my lord ; she never told her love, ^{SOUL}
But let concealment, like a worm i'th' bud,
Feed on her damask cheek : She pin'd in thought,
And with a green and yellow melancholy,
She sat, like Patience on a monument,
Smiling at grief*.

In these few lines, which are as great and beautiful almost as any that ever were wrote, the whole animated force of poetry is exhausted in a striking combination of metaphors, epithets and images; the comparing her concealed love to a worm in the bud; the epithet *damask* cheek, the metaphorical expressions *green and yellow* melancholy, so finely adapted

* Vide Theobald's Shakespear, vol. iii. p. 129.

to the subject, and lastly the comparison of the silent calmness of her passion to Patience on a monument smiling at grief, which forms a striking image, all concur to render these lines infinitely beautiful, and to convince us that they are the produce of a most exuberant poetic imagination.

In Macbeth, life is compared to several things, in a string of metaphors that strengthen each other :

Out, brief candle !
 Life's but a walking shadow ; a poor play'r,
 That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
 And then is heard no more ! It is a tale
 Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
 Signifying nothing * !

Mr. Rowe's Jane Shore will afford me another instance of the beauty of several metaphors combined in one passage :

* Shakesp. vol. vi. p. 340.

Shore,

Shore, speaking of the unfortunate fate of women, says,

If poor weak woman swerve from virtue's rule,
 If, strongly charm'd, she leaves the *thorny way*,
 And in the *softer paths* of pleasure stray;
 Ruin ensues, reproach, and endless shame,
 And one false *step* entirely damns her fame:
 In vain with tears the loss she may deplore,
 In vain look back to what she was before,
 She *sets*, like *stars that fall*, to *rise* no more*.

I need not point out to the reader what a fine effect the metaphors in these lines have, especially that in the last; they are indeed the very life of it; and although the poetry here rises much above what Rowe's genius generally produced, yet the most moving and apparent beauties are entirely owing to a seasonable use of the metaphor.

A single metaphor, when well applied, equally enlivens a discourse, and throws

* Act I. scene II.

a beau-

a beauty over a passage superior to what results from any other figure. Thus Longinus, by comparing Homer, in the *Odyſſey* to the ſetting ſun, expreſſes his idea in a much clearer and more noble manner than he could otherwiſe poſſibly have done : It is one of the fineſt ſimiles the wit of man ever produced.

Οθεν εν τη Οδυſſεια παρικοſαι τις αν καλα-
δυομενω τον Ομηρον ηλιω. & διχα της ſφoδρα-
τητος παραμενει το μεγαθος *.

The metaphor gives a greater ornament, ſtrength, and grandeur to a diſ-
courſe, than any other figure ; the reader
may have often obſerved, that the moſt
exquiſite expreſſions are generally meta-
phorical, and derive all their merit from

* So that in the *Odyſſey*, Homer may with
juſtice be reſembled to the ſetting ſun, whoſe
grandeur ſtill remains, without the meridian heat
of his beams. Sec. 9.

that figure. Indeed it has the peculiar advantage, according to Quintilian's observation, to shine from its own light in the most celebrated pieces, and to distinguish itself most in them. It enriches a language in some measure, by an infinity of expressions, by substituting the figurative in the room of the simple or plain; it throws a great variety into the style; it raises and aggrandizes the most minute and common things; it gives us great pleasure by the ingenious boldness with which it strikes out in quest of foreign expressions, instead of the natural ones which are at hand; it deceives the mind agreeably, by shewing it one thing and meaning another: In fine, it gives a body, if we may so say, to the most spirited things, and makes them almost the objects of hearing and sight, by the sensible images it delineates to the
 imagina-

imagination †. Thus when Demosthenes compares Philip to a fever, he strikes us by the strength of his metaphor :

Επει οτι γε ωσπερ περιδοσ η καταβολη πυρετου η
τινος αλλε κακω — προσερχεται *.

Otway's Venice Preserved will afford me a remarkable instance of the efficacy of a metaphor that borrows its allusion from an object extremely different from the subject he describes.

Homer's description of Apollo breaking down the Grecian wall is very noble, and the metaphor amazingly beautiful :

Then with his hand he shook the mighty wall,
And lo ! the turrets nod, the bulwarks fall :
Easy as when ashore an infant stands,
And draws imagin'd houses in the sands ;
The sportive wanton, pleas'd with some new play,
Sweeps the flight works and fashion'd domes away.

† Vide Rollin, vol. ii. ar. 5.

* Demosth. Philip. III. p. 69. Morel.

Pierre, in Venice Preserved, telling Jaffier what great advantage their cause will reap from success in their designs, compares the lazy senators to unclean birds :

Fools shall be pull'd
From wisdom's seat ; those baleful unclean birds,
Those lazy owls, who (perch'd near fortune's top)
Sit only watchful with their heavy wings
To cuff down new-fledg'd virtues, that would rise
To nobler heights, and make the grove harmo-
nious *.

This passage is very beautiful, and the simile pursued with great spirit and poetic fire : Although the allusion is drawn from quite a foreign object, yet it is plain and striking. The same may be observed of one of Dryden's similes :

So should my honour, like a rising swan,
Break with her wings the falling drops away,
And proudly plough the waves †.

* Act II. scene I.

† Don Sebastian, act IV.

Thus

Thus Dr. Young uses one of those distant comparisons with great judgment :

As it is bold and vain (says he), so perhaps, it has always been prejudicial to the truth, to labour at rational evictions of sacred mysteries ; for by these means men attempt to comprehend the divine nature, by putting it under some injurious disguise ; *as we venture to gaze at the sun, after we have watched him into a cloud**.

The meaning here would have been understood without the help of this metaphor ; but concluding it in that figurative manner throws a beauty over the whole sentence, and pleases the imagination at the same time that it satisfies the understanding. Mr. Mason's *Elfrida* contains also two instances of this species of figures. He compares jealousy to the twining ivy :

See, *Elfrida*,

Ah see ! how round yon branching elm the ivy

* Centaur not fabulous. His Works, vol. iv. p. 118.

Twines its green chain, and poisons what sup-
ports it ;
Not less injurious to the blooming shoots
Of growing love, is sickly jealousy †.

The jealousy of love would not be apt to raise an idea in our minds of ivy twining about a tree, had we not seen these lines ; but yet nothing can be more expressive, nor can we help being struck at the resemblance ; the expressive metaphorical epithets, *blooming shoots of growing love*, heighten the spirit of the poetry. The other passage abounds in several very beautiful similitudes :

No, fond Elfrida,
His full-plum'd soul is wing'd for nobler flights :
There let it soar, nor like the lofty lark,
That rides the sun-beam warbling, sudden drop,
And roost itself in the low earthly furrow*.

These lines would alone shew the efficacy of metaphorical expressions ; and

† Page 13.

* Page 16.

yet some modern authors, in the remarks they have made on the beauty of style, condemn them as if they were contrary to the genius of our language; they are willing that it should flow from its source, and disapprove the use of borrowed expressions, which they compare to those artificial waters that are brought into gardens by force of art. I believe that it might be said at all times, without hurting the respect due to those great masters, that metaphorical expressions are perhaps the greatest ornaments of our language. It is in the invention of those rich and happy expressions, that appears the address and good taste of those who know how to write politely. “ Il ne faut (says the abbé de Bellegarde) qu’ouvrir leurs livres, on en trouve à chaque page, pour bien exprimer une chose, ils se servent d’un mot, qui ne lui

est pas propre, & que l'usage a appliqué à un autre sujet ; c'est en quoi consiste la délicatesse & la finesse de l'expression, lorsqu'on transporte de certaines termes de la chose qu'ils signifient proprement à un autre qu'ils ne signifient qu'indirectement *.

Mr. Pope's poems abound in numberless instances of beautiful metaphorical expressions : The following lines contain a very fine one.

In the soul while memory prevails,
The solid power of understanding fails ;
Where beams of bright imagination play,
The memory's soft figures melt away †.

“ I hardly believe there is in any language, says Mr. Warton, a metaphor more appositely applied, or more ele-

* Reflexions sur l'Elegance & la Politesse du Stile, p. 176.

† Essay on Criticism, ver. 56.

gantly expressed than this, of the effects of the warmth of fancy ||. Longinus somewhere says, that a metaphor never pleases more than when we can hardly discern that it is a metaphor; an observation illustrated by the above lines. Another passage of this celebrated poet's works, will afford one of the finest metaphorical expressions that ever was wrote:

Tho' the same sun, with all-diffusive rays,
Blush in the rose, and in the di'mond blaze.

Moral Essays.

This figure of rhetoric is certainly the most universal enlivener of poetry: At the same time that it adds to the dignity of verse, it gives it an agreeable variety, together with a power of painting out all its images in the boldest and strongest manner in the world†: It is this which
animates

|| Essay on Pope, p. 116.

† Spence's Essay on Pope's Odyssey, p. 28.
The abbé de Bellegarde, speaking of figurative expressions,

animates those objects which must otherwise be still and unaffecting; it flings every thing into motion, life, and action. It is not only of use in striking the imagination with great and sublime ideas,

expressions, says, "Voici le plus grand mystere de la langue; c'est proprement dans les expressions figurées que consiste l'elegance & la politesse du stile; ceux qui prétendent à la gloire de bien écrire, n'y reussiront que par là.

"Quand on manque d'un terme fait pour exprimer ce qu'on veut dire, on se sert de figures, de détours, de circonlocutions, de sorte qu'une expression est figurée, lorsqu'on employe un mot, non pas dans sa signification propre & naturelle, mais dans une signification empruntée. C'est dans le choix de ces locutions, que paroît le génie, l'habileté, & le gout de ceux qui parlent: Car un mot qui seroit peut-être bas, & populaire dans sa signification propre, devient sublime & noble, quand on l'employe au figuré. Les mots ressemblent en quelque façon aux légumes, qui sont naturellement fades, mais qui ont un goût merveilleux, quand elles son bien apprêtées: ainsi des termes bas & fades deviennent piquants, quand ils sont bien mis en œuvre."

Reflexions, &c. p. 204.

marked

marked in the most expressive manner, but it pleases the fancy in the delineation of softer images. Dr. Burk, in comparing great with moderate abilities, was enabled by means of a most beautiful metaphorical expression, to enliven a dry subject in a most poetic manner :

Those persons (says he) who creep into the hearts of most people, who are chosen as the companions of their softer hours, and their reliefs from care and anxiety, are never persons of shining qualities, nor strong virtues : It is rather the *soft green* of the soul on which we rest our eyes, that are fatigued with beholding more glaring objects*.

The Rambler has much the same metaphor on the same subject :

But though these men may be for a time heard with applause and admiration, they seldom delight us long. We enjoy them a little, and then retire to easiness and good-humour ; as the eye

* Philosophical Enquiry, p. 93.

gazes a while on eminences glittering with the sun, but soon turns aching away, to verdure and flowers *.

That these passages are very beautiful, nobody in their senses will deny ; and surely it will be allowed, that their most striking beauties are owing to the metaphors that conclude them.

When Jane Shore is turned out in the most melancholy condition, she reflects on her misfortunes, and at last comforts herself with a faint idea of finding an end to her miseries.

And hark ! methinks the roar that late pursu'd me,
Sinks like the murmurs of the falling wind,
And softens into silence †.

How poetically beautiful are these three lines ; but their beauty is entirely owing

* Vol. ii, p. 94. † Rowe's Works, vol. ii. p. 163.

to the metaphor they clothe : Rowe could not have expressed his idea so clearly, nor with half the elegance, in twenty lines without the help of a simile.

Shakespear displayed a great knowledge of the human mind, when he compared the confused thoughts of a lover to the inarticulate joys of a crowd :

Madam, you have bereft me of all words,
Only my blood speaks to you in my veins;
And there is such confusion in my pow'rs,
As after some oration fairly spoke
By a beloved prince, there doth appear
Among the buzzing pleased multitude;
Where every something being blent together,
Turns to a wild of nothing, save of joy,
Express'd, and not express'd *.

The metaphor is in this passage amplified through several lines, in a manner that cannot but raise the poetry ; one

* Vol. ii. p. 133.

surely must observe what perspicuity this figure gives to the explanation of a poet's ideas. In his *Romeo and Juliet*, he also has a very beautiful metaphor, in which he compares the parting of lovers to a wanton's bird :

I would have thee gone ;
And yet no farther than a wanton's bird,
That lets it hop a little from her hand,
Like a poor pris'ner in his twisted gyves,
And with a silk-thread plucks it back again ;
So loving jealous of his liberty.

Could Addison have given us a description of a general commanding in the heat of battle, that would have struck us in the manner of the following amplification, where he is compared to an angel riding in a whirlwind.

So when an angel, by divine command,
With rising tempests shakes a guilty land,
Such as of late o'er pale Britannia past,
Calm and serene he drives the furious blast ;

And

And, pleas'd th'Almighty's orders to perform,
Rides in the whirlwind, and directs the storm*.

Cicero says, " *Modus nullus est flo-
rentior; nec qui plus luminis afferat ora-
tioni*†." His words may, with great
justness, be applied to this metaphor of
Mr. Addison, where no other figure could
have thrown so much light on his descrip-
tion of the battle.

Now I have mentioned Addison, the
reader will excuse my quoting another
metaphor from his poems, which is ex-
tremely beautiful :

So, where our wide Numidian wastes extend,
Sudden th'impetuous hurricanes descend,
Wheel thro' the air, in circling eddies play,
Tear up the sands, and sweep whole plains away.
The helpless traveller with wild surprize,
Sees the dry desert all around him rise,
And, smother'd in the dusty whirlwind, dies.

* Addison's Works, vol. i. p. 78.

† De Oratore, lib. iii.

“ Thus

“ Thus Syphax (says the Guardian) when he is forming to himself the unexpected and sudden destruction which is to befall the man he hates, expresses himself in an image which none but a Numidian could have a lively sense of ; but yet if the author had ranged over all the objects upon the face of the earth, he could not have found a representation of a disaster so great, so sudden, and so dreadful as this †.”

The most common ideas, and the lowest descriptions, are never so well expressed as by a simile. Thus Shakespear pleases us greatly by making a comparison of the tears on a woman's cheek to the dew on a lilly :

When I did name her brothers, then fresh tears
 Stood on her cheeks, as doth the honey-dew
 Upon a gather'd lilly almost wither'd ‖.

† Guardian, vol. i. No. 64.

‖ Vol. vi. p. 225. Titus Andronicus.

And

And again,

The air hath starv'd the roses in her cheeks,
And pinch'd the lilly-tincture of her face *.

“ Est hoc (says Cicero) magnum ornamentum orationis, in quo obscuritas fugienda est †.” And Mr. Addison, with his usual perspicuity, very justly observes, that the mixture of inconsistent metaphors is a great grievance in the commonwealth of letters. There is not any thing in the world which may not be compared to several things, if considered in several distinct lights; or, in other words, the same things may be expressed by different metaphors. But the mischief is, that an unskillful author shall run these metaphors so absurdly into one another, that there shall be no simile, no agreeable picture, no apt resemblance, but confu-

* Vol. i. p. 199. Two Gentlemen of Verona.

† De Oratore, lib. iii.

sion, obscurity, and noise. Thus I have known a hero compared to a thunderbolt, a lion to the sea; all and each of them proper metaphors for impetuosity, courage, and force: But by bad management, it hath so happened, that the thunder-bolt hath over-flowed its banks, the lion hath been darted through the skies, and the billows have rolled out of the Libyan desert*. Mr. Spence, in his Essay on Pope's *Odyssey*, gives us, from that work, a multitude of instances of clashing metaphors. The force of metaphor is to make things strong, clear, and sensible; any confusion destroys the very end of it, and a little inaccuracy may occasion gross errors this way: Amongst some instances produced by that ingenious gentleman, the following are remarkable:]

* Spectator, vol. viii. No. 595;

Now from my *fond embrace* by tempests torn,
Our other *column of the state* is born,
Nor took a *kind adieu*.

And again,

They *sweep* Neptune's smooth *face*.

And in another place,

Declining, with his *sloping wheels*
Down *sunk* the *sun* *.

To say the god of light was driving his car down the steep of heaven (as Mr. Pope somewhere expresses it) is metaphorical; to say the sun is setting is proper; but should one say the sun is setting with sloping wheels, this would be neither metaphorical nor proper; nor could it raise any thing in the mind but a confusion of ideas.

Shakſpear, with all his excellencies, abounds in these inconsistent metaphors:

* Page 30.

N 2

There

There is a great deal of poetic fire in the following lines ; but sure the metaphor does not throw the least perspicuity over the passage, nor does it enable Romeo to raise a great idea of his love for Juliet, to whom the speech is addressed.

She speaks !

Oh speak again, bright angel ! for thou art
As glorious to this sight, being o'er my head,
As is a winged messenger from heav'n
Unto the white, upturned, wond'ring eyes
Of mortals, that fall back to gaze on him,
When he bestrides the lazy-pacing clouds,
And sails upon the bosom of the air *.

There is something extremely poetic in the two last lines ; but the metaphor, as I said before, is inconsistent and extravagant. In his Macbeth, the following simile, I apprehend, will not please many readers :

The wine of life is drawn, and the mere lees
Is left this vault to brag of.

* Vol. viii. p. 32.

He

He had before said,

There's nothing serious in mortality :

All is but toys ; renown and grace are dead*.

Had he omitted his metaphor, his meaning would have been to the full as clear, and I think as elegantly expressed.

As to expressive epithets, the reader must have observed, that the most beautiful and striking are generally metaphorical, and consequently have been already treated of ; yet there are some that are very picturesque and striking, though not of that species. Thus, in *Jane Shore*, the following lines receive great lustre from them :

My form, alas ! has long forgot to please,
The scene of beauty and delight is chang'd ;
No roses bloom upon my fading cheek,
Nor *laughing* graces wanton in my eyes ;

* Vol. vi. p. 295.

N 3

But

But *baggard* grief, *lean-looking* fallow care,
 And *pining* discontent, a *rueful* train,
 Dwell on my brow, all hideous and forlorn *.

These lines show very plainly the force of expressive epithets, and indeed the very soul of the passage. Mr. Pope excelled greatly in this ornament of poetry; witness the following,

The *gracious dew* of pulpit eloquence,
 And all the *well-whipt cream* of courtly sense †.

Virgil and Homer would afford innumerable instances of the efficacy of expressive epithets, indeed too many for me to quote an hundredth part of them. Though the following is very beautiful, Virgil seems particularly fond of the word *pendere*.

*Pendent opera interrupta, minæque
 Murorum ingentes, æquataque machina cœlo ‡.*

* Rowe's Works, vol. ii. p. 114.

† Pope's Works, vol. iv. p. 226.

‡ Æn. iv. 88.

Every

Every expression here is very poetical, especially *minæ ingentes murorum*, which is quite picturesque; but the word *pendent* very much heightens the description. Nothing can be more beautiful than the following lines,

Interea dulces pendent circum oscula nati *.

Ille ubi complexu Æneæ colloque pependit †.

Mr. Mason, in his *Elfrida*, has a short passage which contains some epithets very picturesque :

The delicate soft tints
Of snowy innocence, the crimson glow
Of blushing modesty, there both fly off,
And leave the faded face no nobler boast
Than well-rang'd lifeless features ‡.

It may be said that the *soft tints of snowy innocence* is a metaphorical expression; but that beautiful one, *crimson glow of blushing modesty*, is a pure epithet, and greatly enlivens the whole passage.

* Georg. ii. 523. † Æn. i. 719. ‡ p. 15.

Those in the following lines are very beautiful, and the metaphor in them very just :

O have you seen, bath'd in the morning dew,
 The budding rose its infant bloom display;
 When first its virgin tints unfold to view,
 It shrinks, and scarcely trusts the blaze of day.
 So soft, so delicate, so sweet she came,
 Youth's damask glow just dawning on her cheek:
 I gaz'd, I sigh'd, I caught the tender flame,
 Felt the fond pang, and droop'd with passion
 weak †.

I shall not take up any more of the reader's time in proving how much expressive epithets ornament a discourse: They are certainly the very life of some species of composition; especially the descriptive, which raises and animates in a wonderful manner. I shall conclude with the words of the abbé de Bellegardé: “ La vivacité de l'expression consiste dans

† Cynthia. Doddsley's poems, vol. vi. p. 237.

l'assemblage de certains termes énergiques, qui mettent sous les yeux ce que l'on pense : Il en est à peu près comme de certains traits de burin bien enfoncés, ou de ces coups de pinceau hardis & heureux, qui représentent au naturel la personne dont on fait le portrait. Pour s'exprimer vivement, il faut d'ordinaire le faire en peu de mots; la multitude des paroles rend l'expression languissante, & lui ôte ce feu, qui la rend vive & animée. C'est s'exprimer vivement que de ramasser un grand sens en peu de paroles, ce sont comme des images naturelles de la pensée. Rien ne donne plus de grace au discours, qu'une épithète bien placée ; au contraire, les épithètes vagues & inutiles le rendent insipide & languissant. Certaines locutions qui frappent, qui éblouissent, & qui paroissent si élégantes, doivent tout leur éclat, & tout leur agrément

ment a des epithetes riches & heureuses, qui expriment vivement & délicatement ce qu'on veut dire. L'esprit & la vivacité d'un auteur paroît dans le choix des epithetes qu'il met en œuvre *.

S E C T. V.

NOTHING can be more directly opposite to the genius of the English language than swelling and bombast expressions: A noble thought ought to be expressed with energy and force; but nothing can differ more than the sublime and bombast in composition. To employ sonorous and magnificent language to clothe a little, trifling, or common thought, is one of the greatest absurdities that an author can be guilty of; whatever is unnatural cannot please readers

* Réflexions sur l'Elegance, &c. p. 26.—74.

of taste ; and surely nothing can be more diametrically opposite to nature than turgid and swelling expressions, points, and quibbles, and low expressions. I am sorry to say it, but many English authors of the first class, and especially our poets, have given into the use of these false ornaments to discourse. The immortal Shakespear is full of them ; half the fire of Lee's tragic genius is exhausted in the magnificence of his diction ; all his thoughts are hid behind a cloud of words : Dryden's tragedies would afford innumerable instances of fustian. It would be endless to name all the authors that have disfigured their works by the misapplication of pompous epithets, and obscured their meaning by what the French very properly call *Les jeux de mots*.

Shakespear's imagination was certainly clouded when he wrote the following lines ;
The

The city cast
Her people out upon her, and Anthony,
Enthron'd i'th' market-place, did sit alone,
Whistling to the air, which, but for vacancy,
Had gone to gaze on Cleopatra too,
And made a gap in nature †.

The thought here is extravagant, unnatural, and absurd. Dryden himself could hardly exceed this stretch even of the hyperbole itself; and yet he has wrote as heroic pieces of nonsense as most authors, witness the following : A lover says,

My wound is great, because it is so small.

The celebrated duke of Buckingham immediately cried out,

Then 'twould be greater, were it none at all.

On which the play was instantly damned*.

† Antony and Cleopatra.

* Walpole's Catalogue of Royal and Noble Authors, vol. ii. p. 79.

Atioſto, in one of his extravagant thoughts, I believe exceeded any thing of the kind that ever was wrote :

*Il pover huomo che non ſen'era accorto
Andava combattendo, & era morto.*

These words are ſpoke by one of his heroes ; in Engliſh, “ That in the heat of the engagement, not perceiving that he was killed, he ſtill fought on vigorously, as dead as he was †.”

A very ingenious author of the preſent age, to whom the Engliſh language is greatly indebted, but too often ſwells his diction into bombast : I could produce many inſtances of it, but the following one is remarkable :

Thoſe who deſire to partake of the pleaſure of wit, muſt contribute to its production ; ſince the

† *La Maniere de bien penſer les Ouvrages d'Esprit*, p. 14.

mind flagitates without external ventilation; and that effervescence of the fancy which flashes into transport, can be raised only by the infusion of dissimilar ideas †.

Quintilian observes, that “ *Prima est eloquentiæ virtus perspicuitas.*” And again, “ *Plerumque accidit, ut faciliora sint ad intelligendum & lucidiora multo, quæ a doctissimo quoque dicuntur.*” Few, I believe will dispute this authority; but what shall we say to the above bombast, which is laboured into obscurity? Is it not surprizing, that an author, who in some of his essays writes the most elegant language, should fall into such littleness of composition *? The idea was just about as well expressed as one

† Rambler, vol. ii. No. 101.

* Expression is the dress of thought, and still appears more decent, as more suitable;
A vile conceit in pompous words express'd;
Is like a clown in regal purple dress'd.

Essay on Criticism.

in Shakespeare's Twelfth Night : Olivia asks Viola how the Duke loves her, to which she answers,

With adorations, with fertile tears,
With groans that thunder love, with sighs of fire †.

The same play affords a curious instance of quibbling, far beneath the genius of Shakespear :

Sir And. O had I but follow'd the arts!

Sir Tob. Then had'st thou had an excellent head of hair.

Sir And. Why, would that have mended my hair †

Sir Tob. Past question ; for thou seest it will not curl by nature *.

In Hamlet, Polonius, speaking to the Queen, says

'Tis true, 'tis pity;
And pity 'tis, 'tis true ; a foolish figure —
And farewell it.

Foolish, indeed. Another pun in the same play is almost as good.

† Vol. iii. p. 117.

* Vol. iii. p. 107.

Ham. And what did you enact?

Pol. I did enact Julius Cæsar, I was kill'd by
Capitol; Brutus kill'd me.

Ham. It was a brute part of him to kill so capital a calf there.

Dryden is almost as faulty. In *All for Love*, Ventidius tells Antony that he was framed

So perfect, that the gods, who form'd you, wonder'd
At their own skill, and cry'd, A lucky hit
Has mended our design!

Alas! poor Mr. Bayes! this is the very height of the bombast. Ventidius has a fine knack at the outrée; he says that Cleopatra's eyes

have power beyond Theſſalian charms,
To draw the moon from heav'n.

The Italians have given into this fustian and punning species of composition more than other nations in Europe. Tasso's *Gierusalemme* is full of it; amidst

some of the finest flights of imagination, and the most elegant language, we are continually meeting with that tinsel and bombast which disgusts a reader of taste : I must quote a description of the universal effects of love from another of their poets.

Mira d'intorno, Silvio,
 Quanto il mondo hà di vago, e di gentile,
 Opra e d'amore. Amante è il cielo, amante
 La terra, amante il mare.
 Quella, che lassu miri innanzi all'alba
 Così leggiadra stella,
 Ama d'amor anch'essa, e del suo figlio
 Sente le fiamme : ed essa, che innamora
 Innamorata splende :
 E questa è forse l'ora,
 Che le furtive sue dolcezze e' l seno
 Del caro amante lascia :
 Vedila pur, come sfavilla e ride.
 Amano per le selve
 Le monstrose fere ; aman per l'onde
 I veloci delfini, e l'orche gravi*.

* Pastor Fido, act I. scene I.

VOL. IV.

O

Was

Was there ever any thing more extravagant than to make the sun, stars, bears, dolphins, and whales, all in love, and the sea itself ready to boil over with it.

Pope's thought of its original is almost as extravagant :

I know thee, love ! on foreign mountains bred,
Wolves gave thee suck, and savage tygers fed ;
Thou wert from *Ætna's* burning entrails torn,
Got by fierce whirlwinds, and in thunder born *.

There is something so low and little in quibbling, that it is amazing an author of genius should ever fall into so absurd a custom. Shakespear's pun on the word Rome is well known :

This is Rome indeed,
And room enough.

Generally speaking, there is no wit in quibbling, or very little ; nothing costs

* Pastorals. Works, vol. i. p. 31.
1c/s,

less, or is more easily found. Ambiguity, which makes up its character, is less an ornament of discourse than a fault; and it is that which makes it insipid; especially when he who uses it, thinks he speaks finely, and values himself upon it. On the other side, it is not always easy to be understood; the mysterious appearance which gives it the double meaning, is the occasion that a man cannot often come at the true sense without some pains; and when he is come at it, he is sorry for his labour; he thinks himself cheated, and I cannot tell but that what he feels at such a time is a sort of vexation for having searched so long to find nothing. All these reasons sink the credit of pure quibbles very low with men of good sense*.

“ Low

* A parler en général, il n'y a point d'esprit dans l'équivoque, ou il y en a fort peu. Rien

O z

ne

“ Low and sordid thoughts (says Longinus) are terrible blemishes to fine sentiments. Those of Herodotus, in his description of a tempest, are divinely noble; but the terms in which they are expressed very much tarnish and impair the lustre. Thus when he says, “ The seas began to *seethe*,” how does the uncouth sound of the word *seethe* lessen the gran-

ne coûte moins, & ne se trouve plus facilement. L'ambiguïté en quoi consiste son caractère, est moins un ornement du discours qu'un défaut; & c'est ce qui la rend insipide, sur tout quand celui qui s'en sert y entend finesse, & s'en fait honneur. D'un autre côté elle n'est pas toujours aisée à entendre: l'apparence mystérieuse que lui donne son double sens, fait souvent qu'on ne va pas au véritable, sans quelque peine; & quand on y est parvenu on a regret à sa peine, on se croit joué, & je ne sçai si ce qu'on sent alors n'est pas une manière de dépit, d'avoir cherché pour ne rien trouver. Toutes ces raisons décreditent fort les pures équivoques parmi les personnes de bon sens.

La Manière de bien penser, p. 23.

deur?

deur? And further, "The wind (says he) was *tired out*, and those who were wrecked in the storm ended their lives very *disagreeably*." To be *tired out* is a mean and vulgar term; and that *disagreeably*, a word highly disproportioned to the tragical event it is used to express *."

Words become low by the occasions to which they are applied, or the general character of them who use them; and the disgust which they produce arises

* Διὸν δ' αἰσχῦναι τὰ μεγέθη καὶ ἡ μικρότης τῶν οἰσμάτων. παρὰ γὰρ τῷ Ἡρόδω καὶ μὲν τὰ λήμματα δαιμονίως ὁ χαμῶν περιφρασαί, τινὰ δὲ καὶ τὴν Δία περιίχει τῆς ἕλης πλεονέστερα, καὶ τὴν μὲν ἴσως, 'ζέσσης δὲ τῆς θαλάσσης.' ὡς καὶ 'ζέσσης' πολὺ τὸ ὑψ. περισπᾷ, διὰ τὸ κακίστον. αἶμ', 'ὁ αἶμα', φησὶν, ἐκοπίασε. καὶ τὴν περὶ τὸ ναυάγιον δραστομένους ἐξεδίχαιο 'τέλ. ἄχαρι.' αἰσμεν γὰρ τὸ 'κοπιασθαι' καὶ ἰδιώτικον· τὸ δ' 'ἄχαρι,' τηλικύτῃ πάθους ἀποκρίσειον.

Long. Περὶ Υψους, § 43.

Ο 3.

from

from the revival of those images with which they are commonly united. Thus, if in the most solemn discourse, a phrase happens to occur which has been successfully employed in some ludicrous narrative, the gravest auditor finds it difficult to refrain from laughter; when they who are not prepossessed by the same accidental association, are utterly unable to guess the reason of his merriment. Words which convey ideas of dignity in one age, are banished from elegant writing or conversation in another, because they are in time debased by vulgar mouths, and can be no longer heard without the involuntary recollection of unpleasing images.

When Macbeth is confirming himself in the horrid purpose of stabbing his king, he breaks out, amidst his emotions,

tions, into a wish natural to a murderer.

Come, thick night !

And pall thee in the damnest smook of hell,
That my keen knife see not the wound it makes;
Nor heav'n peep thro' the blanket of the dark,
To cry, Hold ! hold !

In this passage is exerted all the force of poetry, that force which calls new powers into being, which embodies sentiment, and animates matter : yet, perhaps, scarce any man now peruses it without some disturbance of his attention from the counteraction of the words to the ideas. What can be more dreadful than to implore the presence of night, invested, not in common obscurity, but in the *smook of hell* ? yet the efficacy of this invocation is destroyed by the insertion of an epithet now seldom heard but in the stable, and *dun* night may come or go without any other notice than contempt. .

We cannot surely but sympathize with the horror of a wretch about to murder his master, his friend, his benefactor, who suspects that the weapon will refuse its office, and start back from the breast which he is preparing to violate? yet this sentiment is weakened by the name of an instrument used by butchers and cooks in the meanest employments ; we do not immediately conceive that any crime of importance is to be committed with a *knife* ; or who does not, at last, from the long habit of connecting a knife with fordid offices, feel aversion rather than terror ?

Macbeth proceeds to wish, in the madness of guilt, that the inspection of heaven may be intercepted, and that he may in the involutions of infernal darkness escape the eye of Providence. This is the utmost

most extravagance of determined wickedness; yet this is so debased by two unfortunate words, that while I endeavour to impress on my reader the energy of the sentiment, I can scarce check my risibility when the expression forces itself upon my mind; for who, without some relaxation of his gravity, can hear of the avengers of guilt *peeping through a blanket**?

In short, it would be endless to produce all the instances of the bombast, or of low expressions, that modern authors would afford; there is certainly nothing that spoils a discourse so much as false ornaments, and an affectation of expressing every little idea in high-sounding and

* Rambler, vol. iv. No. 168. Whose remarks on this passage were so much to my present purpose, as to occasion my quoting it at length.

pompous phrases ; nor does it need any argument to convince the reader of taste, that low words, when met with, even in a noble composition, disgust : these opinions are too well known, and too universally allowed, to be disputed.

S E C T. VI.

THAT the sound in poetry is oftentimes adapted to the sense, it would be stupidity to deny, as the fact is evident in the works of a multitude of authors. But it must certainly be allowed, that different people form very different ideas of this poetic beauty ; and that many imagine they discern it in passages which make no such impression on others. Thus the following lines in the Essay on Criticism were allowed, for some time, to contain this elegance in a high degree :

Soft

Soft is the strain, when Zephyr gently blows,
 And the smooth stream in smoother numbers flows;
 But when loud billows lash the sounding shore,
 The hoarse rough verse should, like the torrent, roar.
 When Ajax strives some rock's vast weight to throw,
 The line too labours, and the words move slow.
 Not so when swift Camilla scours the plain,
 Flies o'er th' unbending corn, and skims along the
 main.

But the Rambler has endeavoured to overturn this opinion, and in the minds of some readers has succeeded in the attempt. "From these lines (says he) laboured with great attention, and celebrated by a rival wit, may be judged what can be expected from the most diligent endeavours after this imagery of sound. The verse intended to represent the whispering of the vernal breeze, must be confessed not much to excel in softness or volubility; and the smooth stream runs with a perpetual clashing of jarring consonants.

The

The noise and turbulence of the torrent is, indeed, distinctly imaged, for it requires little skill to make our language rough : But in these lines which mention the effort of Ajax, there is no particular heaviness, obstruction, or delay. The swiftness of Camilla is rather contrasted than exemplified ; why the verse should be lengthened to express speed, will not easily be discovered. In the dactyls used for that purpose by the ancients, two short syllables were pronounced with such rapidity as to be equal only to one long ; they therefore naturally exhibit the act of passing through a long space in a short time : But the Alexandrine, by its pause in the midst, is a tardy and stately measure ; and the word *unbending*, one of the most sluggish and slow which our language affords, cannot much accelerate its motion."

OF
Homer's.

Homer's poems would afford me innumerable instances of this poetic cadence; with what harshness of numbers has he described the wind rending the sails of a ship :

ἰσὶα δὲ σφιν

Τριχθα τε καὶ τετραχθα διεσχισεν ἰς ἀνεμοῖο*.

What soft and gentle harmony is there in the lines where he describes the calm and persuasive eloquence of Nestor :

Τοιοῖσι δὲ Νέστωρ

Ἡδυεπὴς ἀγορεύσει, λίγυς Πυλίων ἀγορήτης,

Τε καὶ ἀπογλώσσης μελίστος γλυκυίων ῥέεν αὐδῆ†.

The swiftness of the following lines, says Rollin ||, may dispute the rapidity of the horse they describe :

Οἷοι Τρωῖοι ἵπποι ἐπιστάμενοι πεδίοιο

Κραιπνὰ μάλ' ἐνθα κ' ἐνθα διωκόμεν ἠδὲ φεέσθαι ‡.

Xenophon, in describing a battle, also adapts the words to the subject : The fol-

* Odyss. ix. 7.

† Il. i. 247.

|| Belles Lettres, tome i. liv. 2.

‡ Il. v. 222.

lowing

lowing short abrupt sentences are very expressive of hurry and confusion :

Εὐθὺς γὰρ ἀνεβόησαν τε πάντες, καὶ προσπέ-
σοντες ἐμάχοντο, ἐωθέν, ἐωθέν, ἔκαιον, ἐπαί-
οντο. Καταπνιγθεὶς δὲ τις ἀπὸ τῆ ἱππῆ τῶν τῷ
Κύρῳ ὑπερετῶν, &c. *

What a horrible verse Virgil gives us, when he describes the monstrous Polyphemus :

Monstrum horrendum, informe, ingens, cui lu-
men ademptum.

Perfius also, as the abbé du Bos observes, has a verse where he speaks of a snuffler, that hardly can be pronounced without snuffling :

Rancidulum quiddam balba de nare locutus.

Sat. I.

The following lines in Boileau's Ode on the taking Namur, are adorned with this poetic beauty ;

* Cyropædia, lib. vii. 488, 1727.

Sur

Sur les monceaux de piques,
De corps morts, de rocs, de briques,
S'ouvrir un large chemin.

“ I do not recollect (says the above-mentioned ingenious author) more than one scrap of French poetry of this kind, that can be put in any sort of competition with such numbers of verses which authors of all ages have commended in the works of those poets who wrote when the Latin was a vulgar tongue ; this is the description of the above assault ; The poet paints there, in mimic phrases and elegant verses, the soldier clambering up a breach ||.”

Mr. Mason, in his *Elfrida*, has a line that finely describes in the sound a flow motion :

Move streams flow-wand'ring thro' her winding
vales *.

|| *Reflexions Critiques*, tom. i. p. 35.

* P. 19.

And

And Pope, in three lines which I do not remember to have seen quoted on the occasion, adapts the cadence to the subject in a remarkable manner, particularly in the last :

Waller was smooth, but Dryden taught to join }
 The varying verse, the full resounding line, }
 The long majestic march, and energy divine †. }

The difficulty of accommodating the sound to the sense, in the English language, is most when softness should be expressed. The word *slumb'rous* is one of the roughest in the language ; what a ridiculous figure it makes, joined with the word *soft* ?

Soft, slumb'rous, Lydian air, to sooth his rest *.

In Pope's *Odysssey* also,

There ev'ry eye with slumb'rous chains she bound ‡.

† Works, vol. iv. p. 135.

* Warton's *Enthusiast*.

‡ Book ii. ver. 444.

~~In another place,~~

The downy fleece to form the slumb'rous bed †.

Such harsh sounds to express softness,
are intolerable.

There are several delicacies of versification which ought always to be attended to: The natural roughness of the English language requires some pains to be taken to polish and soften it, especially in poetry. Nothing has this effect so much as chusing as many words as possible that abound in vowels :

Ye gentle gales, beneath my body blow,
And softly lay me on the waves below.

The number of vowels in these two lines gives them a softness, seldom met with in the language. Another point not less important, is to reject those words

† Book iv. ver. 404.

which are rendered dissonant by the letter S : There are scarce ten lines of our poetry that is not unmusically hissing, occasioned by this letter. The lines in which it does not appear are generally more musical and clear than others. When it is joined with vowels, it is not so disagreeable ; but has a very rough effect with consonants.

And scatters storms and tempests as she rides *.

How different when there is not one in a line :

And like a lambent flame around her play'd †.

What a fine flow of harmony is there in this passage in Mr. Gray's Ode :

Tho' he inherit

Nor the pride, nor ample pinion,

That the Theban eagle bear,

Sailing with supreme dominion

Thro' the azure deep of air.

* Porfenna, by Dr. Lisle. Doddsley.

† Ibid.

But

But there is only one S in the four lines, and that joined with three vowels.—Nothing occurs more often in the English poetry than the cæsure ; it is sometimes occasioned by the *hiatus*, which is not half so disagreeable : the versification in the following lines is not without its merit, but one cæsure (to reduce a word to a single syllable) spoils all its harmony :

and feel,

In the soft duties of a virtuous love,
Such pure, serene delight, as far transcends
What thou *fly'st* pleasure, the delirious joy
Of an intoxicated feverish brain *.

It would be endless to quote all the instances of this beauty of versification, which even modern authors would afford : But the curious reader may find a few, which I have taken no notice of, in the 92d and 94th Ramblers ; and a great

* West's Institution of the Garter. Doddsley.

many from ancient authors in Dionysius of Halicarnassus.

S E C T. VII.

ONE of the most necessary disquisitions, in settling the distinct properties of the several species of the belles lettres, is an enquiry into the two grand vehicles of all modern poetry, blank verse and rhyme: It is but an absurd dispute, which deserves the preference; it might bear the appearance of a debate in the times of monkish ignorance and barbarity; but in an age which has the least pretensions to the title of polite and learned, such a dispute is a disgrace. Whose numbers shall we prefer, the heavenly soarings, the divine harmony of a Milton, or the childish jingles of a Pope? The ancients, those great masters of composition,

sition, knew nothing of rhyme; a strong proof that it was invented in the obscure ages, when all knowledge and literature centered among the monks: had it been more ancient, we should have seen some remains of it among the Greeks and Latins. The measure of their poetry was no such clog as rhyme; the noble poetic sentiments of Homer, which burn throughout his poems with so bright a splendor, was assisted, not cramped by his versification: their measure gave a full flow to the fire of their poetry; and did not, like our rhyme, confine the finest expressions to the couplet. Some sticklers for rhyme are so absurd as to imagine that the heroic measure of the ancients was as much cramped as our rhyme, by the pauses at the end of the lines; but of this the falseness is at once perceived by turning to Homer or Virgil, whose lines

flow into the finest melody by means of their latitude of arrangement, and the use of long words *. But Dr. Young,
speaking

† Milton's advertisement of the verse, prefixed to his *Paradise Lost*, is worth quoting here, as it is so much to my purpose: "The measure is English heroic verse, without rhyme, as that of Homer in Greek, and Virgil in Latin; rhyme being no necessary adjunct or true ornament of poem or good verse, in longer works especially; but *the invention of a barbarous age* to set off wretched matter and lame metre: graced indeed since by the use of some famous modern poets, carried away by custom, but much to their own vexation, hindrance, and constraint, to express many things otherwise (and for the most part worse) than else they would have expressed them. Not without cause therefore, some (both Italian and Spanish) poets of prime note have rejected rhyme both in longer and shorter works; as have also long since our best English tragedies; as a thing of itself to all judicious ears trivial and of no true musical delight: which consists only in apt numbers, fit quantity of syllables, and the sense variously drawn out from one verse into another: not in the jingling sound of like endings; a fault avoided by the learned ancients,
both

speaking of Pope's translation of Homer, sets the analogy of blank verse and the ancient heroic measure in a just light.

“ What a fall is it from Homer's numbers, free as air, lofty and harmonious as the spheres, into childish shackles and tinkling sounds ! But, in his fall, he is still great —

Nor appears
Less than archangel ruin'd, and the excess
Of glory obscur'd.

Had Milton never wrote, Pope had been less to blame ; but in Milton's genius, Homer as it were personally rose to forbid Britons doing him that ignoble wrong ;

both in poetry and all good oratory. This neglect then of rhyme so little is to be taken for a defect (though it may seem so perhaps to vulgar readers), that it rather is to be esteemed an example set (the first in English) of *antient liberty* recovered to heroic poem, from the troublesome and modern bondage of rhyming.

it is less pardonable, by that effeminate decoration, to put Achilles in petticoats a second time : how much nobler had it been, if his numbers had rolled on in full flow, through the various modulations of masculine melody, into those grandeurs of solemn sound, which are indispensably demanded by the native dignity of heroic song. How much nobler, if he had resisted the temptation of that Gothic demon, which modern poetry tasting, became mortal. O how unlike the deathless divine harmony of three great names (how justly joined !) Milton, Greece, and Rome ? His verse, but for this little speck of mortality in its extreme parts, as his hero had in his heel, like him had been invulnerable and immortal. But, unfortunately, that was undipped in Helicon, as this in Styx. Harmony as well as eloquence is essential

to poetry ; and a murder of his music, is putting half Homer to death. Blank is a term of diminution ; what we mean by blank verse, is verse unfallen, uncurs'd, verse reclaimed, reinthroned in the true language of the gods, who never thundered, nor suffered their Homer to thunder, in rhyme ; and therefore, I beg you, my friend, to crown it with some nobler term, nor let the greatness of the thing lie under the defamation of such a name*."

Whatever is a cramp upon the poet, without yielding great beauties, ought to be rejected. Now rhyme throws such a perpetual sameness and monotony, in long works, over the whole, that the poetic fire must necessarily be half extinguished ; for how can sublime images and lofty conceptions be expressed through

* Conjectures on original Composition, p. 14.

any extent of lines pent up in the shackle of the couplet? What a figure would the sixth book of the *Paradise Lost* have made in rhyme! blank verse, by giving an opportunity to the poet to express his sentiments in a full flow of expressive and melodious versification, pours forth all the fire of imagination in an unbounded stream.

Of this we have a fine example in the following passage, in which the poet sets out with almost a prosaic weakness of verse; thence rising gradually, like the swell of an organ, he soars into the highest dignity of sound* :

Th' infernal serpent ; he it was, whose guile,
 Stir'd up with envy and revenge, deceiv'd
 The mother of mankind, what time his pride
 Had cast him out from heav'n, with all his host
 Of rebel angels, by whose aid aspiring

* Webb's Remarks, p. 61.

To set himself in glory above his peers,
 He trusted to have equalled the Most High,
 If he oppos'd? and with ambitious aim
 Against the throne and Monarchy of God
 Rais'd impious war in heav'n and battle proud,
 With vain attempt. Him the almighty power
 Hurl'd headlong flaming || from th'ethereal sky,
 With hideous ruin and combustion || down
 To bottomless perdition, || there to dwell
 In adamant chains, and penal fire,
 Who durst defy th'omnipotent to arms.

It is obvious from what I have already said of it, that the couplet is not formed for such gradations as these. On the contrary, from the sameness in its flow, every sentiment, of what nature soever, comes equally recommended to the ear, and of course to our attention. That melodious pomp of sound, so striking in the passage I just quoted, results merely from the flow of one verse into another, and the variety of pauses which rest almost in every line on a different syllable; how different is rhyme:

Lo, the poor Indian ! whose untutor'd mind
 Sees God in clouds, and hears him in the wind, ||
 His soul proud science never taught to stray
 Far as the solar walk, or milky way ; ||
 Yet simple nature to his hope has giv'n,
 Behind the cloud-topt hill, an humbler heav'n. ||
 Some safer world, in depth of woods embrac'd,
 Some happier island in the watry waste, ||
 Where slaves once more their native land behold.
 No fiends torment, no christians thirst for gold ; ||
 To be content's his natural desire,
 He asks no angel's wing, no seraph's fire, ||
 But thinks, admitted to that equal sky,
 His faithful dog shall bear him company. ||

I have quoted one of the finest passages
 in all Mr. Pope's poems, not only for
 the thought, but the harmony of the
 lines, as far as rhyme will admit : The
 harmony in Milton rose gradually, and
 concluded in the last six lines, which all
 run into each other with the utmost me-
 lody and dignity of sound : In this, the
 pause, as it ever must, rests at the end
 of each couplet ; and what harmony the
 lines

lines contain, is 'struck into' almost distinct parts by each couplet, besides the several half pauses which rest almost regularly at the fourth or the sixth syllable, the melody must of course, in this one passage, be broken and separated into parts, instead of running into that fine easy flow of harmony which rhyme ever mangles. But let me quote another very celebrated passage from his Rape of the Lock, in which his versification shines the brightest of all his poems :

On her white breast || a sparkling cross she wore,
Which Jews might kiss || and infidels adore. ||
Her lively looks || a sprightly mind disclose,
Quick as her eyes, || and as unfix'd as those : ||
Favours to none, || to all the smiles extends,
Oft she rejects, || but never once offends. ||
Bright as the sun, || her eyes the gazers strike ;
And, like the sun, they shine on all alike. ||
Yet graceful ease, || and sweetness void of pride,
Might hide her faults, || if belles had faults to hide. ||
If to her share || some female errors fall,
Look on her face, || and you'll forget them all. ||

In

In these twelve lines, and indeed through half his works, is the repeated tiresome pause at the end of the fourth syllable, which throws such a tedious monotony through them as to destroy every spark of the true poetic fire.

“ With respect to the form of blank verse (says lord Kaimes) it differs not from rhyme farther than rejecting the similar sounds. But let us not think this difference a trifle, or that we gain nothing by it but the purifying our verse from a pleasure so childish. In truth, our verse is extremely cramped by rhyme; and the great advantage of blank verse, is, that being free from the fetters of rhyme, it is at liberty to attend the imagination in its boldest flights. Rhyme necessarily divides verse into couplets; each couplet makes a complete musical period,

period, the parts of which are divided by pauses, and the whole summed up by a full close at the end : The modulation begins anew with the next couplet ; and in this manner a composition in rhyme proceeds couplet after couplet. I have more than once had occasion to observe the influence that sound and sense have upon each other by their intimate union. If a couplet be a complete period with regard to the melody, it ought regularly to be so also with regard to the sense. This, it is true, proves too great a cramp upon composition ; and licences are indulged, as explained above. These, however, must be used with discretion, so as to preserve some degree of uniformity betwixt the sense and the music. There ought never to be a full close in the sense but at the end of a couplet ; and there ought always to be some pause
in

in the sense at the end of every couplet. The same period, as to sense, may be extended through several couplets; but in this case each couplet ought to contain a distinct member, distinguished by a pause in the sense as well as in the sound; and the whole ought to be closed with a complete cadence. Rules such as these must confine rhyme within very narrow bounds. A thought of any extent cannot be reduced within its compass: The sense must be curtailed and broken into pieces, to make it square with the curves of melody; and it is obvious, that short periods afford no latitude for invention. I have examined this point with the greater accuracy, in order to give a juster notion of blank verse; and to shew, that a slight difference in form, may produce a very great difference in substance. Blank verse has
the

the same pauses and accents with rhyme, and a pause at the end of every line like what concludes the first line of a couplet. In a word, the rules of melody in blank verse are the same that obtain with respect to the first line of a couplet ; but, luckily, being disengaged from rhyme, or, in other words, from couplets, there is access to make every line run into another, precisely as the first line of a couplet may run into the second. There must be a musical pause at the end of every line ; but it is not necessary that it be accompanied with a pause in the sense. The sense may be carried on through different lines, till a period of the utmost extent be completed by a full close both in the sense and sound. There is no restraint, other than that this full close be at the end of a line. This restraint is necessary, in order to preserve a coincidence

VOL. IV. Q

dence; but mixt sense and sound, which
 ought to be aimed at in general, and
 is indispensable in the case of a full
 close, because it has a striking effect.
 Hence the aptitude of blank verse for
 inversion, and consequently the lustre of
 its pauses and accents; for which, as ob-
 served above, there is greater scope in in-
 version than when words run in their na-
 tural order.

“ Nothing contributes more than in-
 version to the force and elevation of lan-
 guage. The couplets of rhyme confine
 inversion within narrow limits; nor would
 the elevation of inversion, were there ac-
 cess for it in rhyme, be extremely con-
 cordant with the humbler tone of that
 sort of verse. It is universally agreed,
 that the loftiness of Milton's style sup-
 ports admirably the sublimity of his sub-
 ject;

ject; and it is no less certain that the softness of his style arises chiefly from inversion. Shakespear deals little in inversion; but his blank verse, being a sort of measured prose, is perfectly well adapted to the stage: Laboured inversion is there extremely improper, because in dialogue it can never appear natural.

“Hitherto I have considered the advantage of laying aside rhyme, with respect to that superior power of expression which verse acquires thereby. But this is not the only advantage of blank verse; it has another, not less signal of its kind, and that is, of a more extensive and more complete melody. Its music is not, like that of the rhyme, confined to a single couplet; but takes in a great compass, so as in some measure to rival music properly so called. The intervals betwixt its

Q 2

cadences

cadences may be long or short at pleasure; and by this means its modulation with respect both to richness and variety, is superior far to that of rhyme, and superior even to that of the Greek and Latin hexameter. Of this observation no person can doubt, who is acquainted with the *Paradise Lost*. In that work there are indeed many careless lines, but at every turn it shines out in the richest melody as well as in the sublimest sentiments. Take the following specimen :

Now morn her rosy steps in th' eastern clime
 Advancing, sow'd the earth with orient pearl,
 When Adam wak'd; so custom'd, for his sleep
 Was æery light, from pure digestion bred,
 And temp'rate vapours bland, which th' only sound
 Of leaves and fuming rills, Aurora's fan,
 Lightly dispers'd, and the shrill matin-song
 Of birds on ev'ry bough; so much the more
 His wonder was to find unwaken'd Eve,
 With tresses discompos'd and glowing cheek,
 As through unquiet rest: He, on his side

Leading

Leaping half-rai'd, with looks of cordial love
 Hung over her enamour'd, and beheld
 Beauty, which, whether waking or asleep,
 Shot forth peculiar graces; then with voice
 Mild, as when Zephyrus on Flora breathes,
 Her hand soft touching, whisper'd thus: Awake,
 My fairest, my espous'd, my latest found,
 Heav'n's last best gift, my ever-new delight,
 Awake; the morning shines, and the fresh field
 Calls us; we lose the prime, to mark how spring
 Our tended plants, how blows the citron grove,
 What drops the myrrh, and what the balmy reed,
 How nature paints her colours, how the bee
 Sits on the bloom extracting liquid sweet *.

The French poetry (very little except-
 ed) is all in rhyme; it is worth remark-
 ing how poor and tame their poets in ge-
 neral are; and let me add, owing solely
 to their language, as admirable for light
 subjects, as it is unequal to superior ones.
 So wretchedly unequal is it to true
 poetry, that even their most admired
 tragedies are in rhyme, nor can their bold-
 est poets throw off this desperate shackle;

* Elements of Criticism, vol. ii. p. 457.

the language requires the jingle, to be thrown off from prose; and rather than write tragedies in prose, all their poets are guilty of the greatest and most glaring absurdities: In those situations where the sudden starts of passion lay open the very inmost soul, all must be expressed in rhyme; heroes, lovers, and assassins must all rhyme out their dying groans. The least poetic language in Europe is necessitated to use rhyme; shall we, therefore, whose language is lofty, sonorous, and expressive, and which flows almost naturally into blank verse, shall we adopt and even admire the monkish, childish fetters of rhyme? — Many are the beauties which are ruined by the use of it; I know none it occasions; there is no real beauty in the similitude of sound at the conclusion of two lines; in some high rhymes there is an appearance of it, but

even

even when repeated, become tiresome to the ear; what therefore must a whole epic poem of above ten thousand verses be like?

There is no rule in poetry, whose observance costs so much trouble, and produces so few beauties in verse, as that of rhyming. Rhyme frequently maims, and almost always enervates the sense of the discourse. For one bright thought which the passion of rhyming throws in our way by chance, it is certainly every day the cause of an hundred others, which people would blush to make use of, were it not for the richness or novelty of rhyme with which these thoughts are attended.

And yet the allurement of rhyme has nothing in it worth comparing to the charms of numbers and harmony. The

terminating a syllable with a particular sound, is no beauty of itself. The beauty of rhyme is only a relative one, which consists in a conformity of the termination between the last words of two corresponding verses. This ornament, therefore, which is of so short a duration, is perceived only at the end of two verses, and after having heard the last word of the second verse, which rhymes to the first. One is not even sensible of this pleasure but at the end of three or four verses, if the masculine and feminine verses are interwoven, so that the first and fourth be masculines, and the second and third feminines; a mixture which is very much used in several kinds of poetry.

But to confine our discourse to those verses in which rhyme shines forth in all its lustre and beauty, the richness thereof discovers

distances of itself only at the end of either for equal verse. It is the greater boldness and conformity of sounds between the two last words of the two verses which form its elegance. Now the most part of them who are not themselves of the profession, or, though of the profession, are not particularly fond of rhyme, do not, upon hearing the second rhyme, recollect the first distinctly enough to be charmed with their perfection. Their merit is known rather by reflection than sensation, so trifling is the pleasure by which it tickles the ear.

Some perhaps will say, that there must certainly be a much greater beauty in rhyme than I pretend to allow. The consent of all nations (they will add) is a sensible proof in favour of rhyme, the use of which is at present favourably adopted.

My

My answer is, in the first place, that I do not contest the agreeableness of rhyme; I only look upon this agreeableness in a much inferior light to that which arises from the numbers and harmony of verse, and which shews itself continually during the metrical pronunciation. Numbers and harmony are a light which throws out a constant lustre; but rhyme is a meteor flash, which disappears after having given only a short-lived splendor. In fact, the richest rhyme has but a very transient effect. Were we even to raise the value of verses only by the difficulties that are to be surmounted in making them, it is less difficult, without comparison, to rhyme completely, than to compose numerous and harmonious verses*.

* La nécessité de rimer est la règle de la poésie dont l'observation coûte le plus & jette le moins de beautés dans les vers. La rime estopée lève le sens du discours, & elle l'écrase partout

I am an advocate for blank verse only
in poems of length or dignity, such as
the

29
toujours. Pour une pensée heureuse que l'ardeur
de finir richement peut faire rencontrer par ha-
zard, elle fait certainement employer tous les jours
cent autres pensées dont on auroit dédaigné de se
servir sans la richesse ou la nouveauté de la rime
que ces pensées amènent.

Cependant l'agrément de la rime n'est point à
comparer avec l'agrément du nombre & de l'har-
monie. Une syllabe terminée par un certain son
n'est point une beauté par elle-même. Aussi la
beauté de la rime n'est-elle qu'une beauté de
rapport qui consiste en une conformité de *désinances*
entre le dernier mot d'un vers, & le dernier mot
du vers réciproque. On n'entrevoit donc cette
beauté qui passe si vite qu'au bout de deux vers
après avoir entendu le dernier mot du second vers
qui rime au premier. On ne sent pas même l'a-
grément de la rime qu'au bout de trois & de
quatre vers, lorsque les rimes masculines & femi-
nines sont entrelacées de manière que la première
& la quatrième soient masculines, & la seconde &
la troisième féminines : mélange qui est fort en
usage dans plusieurs espèces de poésie.

Mais pour ne parler ici que des vers où la rime
paraît dans tout son éclat & dans toute sa beau-

the epic, tragic, or those of a miscellaneous nature, when their subjects are important,

té, on n'y sent richesse qu'au bout du second vers. C'est la conformité de son plus ou moins parfaite, entre les derniers mots des deux vers qui fait son élégance. Or la plupart des auditeurs qui ne sont pas du métier, ou qui ne sont point amoureux de la rime bien qu'ils soient du métier, ne se souviennent plus de la première rime, lorsqu'ils entendent la seconde assez distinctement pour être bien flattés de la perfection de ces rimes. C'est plutôt par réflexion que par sentiment qu'on en connoît le mérite, tant le plaisir qu'elle fait à l'oreille est un plaisir mince.

On me dira qu'il faut qu'il se trouve dans la rime une beauté bien supérieure à celle que je lui accorde. L'agrément de la rime, ajoutera-t-on, s'est fait sentir à toutes les nations. Elles ont toutes des vers rimés.

En premier lieu, je ne disconviens pas de l'agrément de la rime ; mais je tiens cet agrément fort au-dessous de celui naît du rythme & de l'harmonie du vers, & qui se fait sentir continuellement durant la prononciation du vers métrique. Le rythme & l'harmonie sont une lumière qui brille toujours, & la rime n'est qu'un éclair qui disparaît après avoir jeté quelque lueur. En effet la rime la plus

important, and give a scope to the true poetic fire. Dr. Akenfide rightly judged when he composed his Pleasures of Imagination, to write it in blank verse; such a noble subject cramped up in rhyme would lose half that enthusiasm of poetry, which gives it its brightest lustre. It is absolutely impossible for a noble subject of any length to be wrote in rhyme, and to lose none of its dignity and merit on that account; It must flag, and that stream of divine fire which blazes out in Homer and Milton, would be reduced to short flashes, and a faint glimmering of smoke and flame.

plus riche, ne fait qu'un effet bien passager. A n'estimer même la mérite des vers que par les difficultés qu'il faut surmonter pour les faire; il est moins difficile sans comparaison de rimer richement que de composer des vers nombreux & remplis d'harmonie.

Reflexions Critiques, tome I. p. 189.

It

It is scarce necessary to reason upon a case that never did, and probably never will happen, viz. an important subject clothed in rhyme, and yet supported in its utmost elevation. A happy thought or warm expression, may at times give a sudden bound upward; but it requires a genius greater than has hitherto existed, to support a poem of any length in a tone much more elevated than that of the *angelody*. Tasso and Ariosto ought not to be made exceptions, and still less Voltaire; and after all, where the poet has the dead weight of rhyme constantly to struggle with, how can we expect an uniform elevation in a pitch, when such elevation, with all the support it can receive from language, requires the utmost effort of the human genius *?

* *Elements of criticism*, vol. ii, p. 454

Rhyme is even more tolerable in epic poems than in tragedies. The custom of concluding acts with rhymes, is a remain of ancient barbarity; but the pieces of Dryden particularly, which are throughout fringed with it, are wretched; and the tragedies of the French, and a few of our own, which are all in rhyme, are most barbarous compositions, and disgrace the theatre. Rhyme is only proper for very light subjects; if good, it gives a value to a song or epigram: I should hate to see a little humorous poem on a trivial subject, dressed out in blank verse: it would be as absurd as the Essay on Man is in rhyme *.

In

* Rhyme is not less unfit for deep distress, than for subjects elevated and lofty; and for that reason has been long disused in the English and Italian tragedy. In a work where the subject is serious, though not elevated, it has not a good effect; because the stiffness of the modulation agrees not with the gravity of the subject. The Essay on Man,

In a word it is amazing that men of
taste who value sentiment more than
words

Man, which treats a subject great and important, would show much better in blank verse. Sportive love, mirth, gaiety, humour, and ridicule, are the province of the rhyme. The boundaries assigned it by nature were extended in barbarous and illiterate ages, and in its usurpations it has long been protected by custom. But taste in the fine arts, as well as in morals, improves daily; and makes a progress, slowly indeed, but uniformly, towards perfection: and there is no reason to doubt, that rhyme, in Britain, will in time be forced to abandon its unjust conquests, and to confine itself within its narrow limits. Rhyme having no relation to sentiment, nor any effect upon the ear other than a mere jingle, ought to be banished all compositions of any dignity, as affording but a trifling and childish pleasure. It will also be observed, that a jingle of words hath in some measure a ludicrous effect: witness the celebrated Poem of Hudibras, the double rhymes of which contribute no small share to its drollery; that this effect would be equally remarkable in a serious work, were it not obscured by the nature of the subject; that having however a constant tendency to give a ludicrous air to the composition,

Words; who ~~had~~ rather meet With one
 good and lofty thought than twenty
 harmonious verses, should be able to re-
 lish rhymes in poems of a superior order.
 So trivial a beauty as rich rhyme can
 give no lustre to a great thought; but,
 on the contrary, cramps the expression of
 it so far as to ruin its appearance; whereas
 a sublime and harmonious composition in
 blank verse enables the poet to swell out
 the whole thought into proper expres-
 sions, and the conception receives new
 beauty from the grandeur of its cloath-
 ing. The author of the Present State of
 Polite Learning in Europe asserts, in his
 usual superficial manner, that blank verse
 is unharmonious; a proof of his acquaint-
 ance with our greatest poets! and adds,

it requires more than ordinary fire to support the
 dignity of the sentiments against such an unde-
 termining antagonist.

Elements of Criticism, vol. ii. p. 448.

VOL. IV.

R

“ If

“ If rhymes, therefore, be more difficult *, for that reason I would have our poets write in rhyme. Such a restriction upon the thought of a good poet; often lifts and increases the vehemence of every sentiment; for fancy, like a fountain, plays highest by diminishing the aperture †.” Let the author produce me the passages in our poets, in which the vehemence of sentiment is increased by the rhymes; the assertion falls to the

* How different is abbé du Bos’ opinion?
 “ Peut on (says he) d’ailleurs ne point regarder le travail bizarre de rimes comme la plus basse des fonctions de la mécanique de la poésie ? ”

Réflexions Critiques, tome i. p. 188.

† Page 151.—1759. A very superficial work, which gives no information on the subject, and employs more pages in railing at the managers of our theatres than in summing up the merit of the principal authors in Europe, not a tenth part of which are ever once mentioned. I suppose the author was unsuccessful in his application to Mr. Garrick.

ground,

ground, without a single instance. But this I know, that for one noble and beautiful passage in rhyme, I will produce ten in blank verse that exceed it; and if the reader does not think the lines I have quoted a sufficient proof of this, let him turn to Mr. Webb's admirable treatise on the Beauties of Poetry, a criticism not wrote in a superficial frothy manner, but with the penetration and elegance of a Longinus; and he will there meet with very convincing arguments in favour of blank verse*.

Of

* I know a very sensible man, who is yet so prejudiced in favour of rhyme, as to defend the use of it in all subjects. Two of his arguments are extremely weak. He says blank verse is no poetry, for with a pair of compasses he could measure out the General Dictionary into blank verse; whereas rhyme in all subjects throws the language off from prose. His second argument is, that rhyme is much easier carried in the memory, and of course more useful. As to the first, the easiness of bad

R 2

blank

Of the same nature with the dispute concerning blank verse and rhyme, is that discussion about which the critics

blank verse is allowed; but good is more scarce than good rhyme; for there are many worthy poets in their garrets at London, who will presently spin a hundred thousand rhymes, and no bad ones neither, and in the whole there shall be as little *poetry* as in my friend's General Dictionary transformed into blank verse. But bad rhyming poetry is much more common than bad blank verse; for the worst poets think there is some merit even in their rhymes, and so pester the public with stuff, that have nothing else to recommend them: any man may rhyme easier than compose harmonious blank verse.

As to the second point, it is very trivial indeed, and proves nothing in proving too much; for if the easiness of remembring is the merit of poetry, a wretched song is of more value than the finest passage in the *Paradise Lost*. Let the instructions for children be wrote in rhyme, but give me the poet,

meum qui pectus inaniter angit,
Irritat, mulcet, falsis terroribus implet,
Ut magus; & modo me Thebis, modo ponit Athe-
nis.

Which will never be in rhyme.

have

have puzzled themselves so much; whether versification is necessary to poetry? a point long debated, but never perfectly settled. The publication of some remarkable pieces lately, such as Fingal, Temora, and the Death of Abel, have in some measure revived the arguments formerly used, and will justify my spending a few pages about it here.

On the first consideration it seems evident, that the true and distinguishing property, or, in other words, the grand excellency of poetry, lies in the thoughts, which are always higher rated than the expression; and it is very certain that the noblest conceptions of the mind may be expressed in prose. This is the argument used by one party; but if we consider what a levelling doctrine it is, we shall perceive that there would be no idea an-

nexed justly to any term, unless we allow certain distinguishing bounds to part and separate the several species of all sorts of effects. That there is such a thing as poetry is most certain; and there must be some essential properties to constitute a poem: But if we give that title to any work in prose, there is no end of such confusion of terms, and poetry and prose may from that time be regarded as the same species of composition, than which there cannot be a more absurd conclusion.

In reading prose, we now and then meet with a noble thought well expressed; we naturally and justly say *it is poetic*: There we should rest; we may assert a piece of prose is poetic, or something like poetry; but we ought not therefore to dignify it at once with the title of poem. A print represents the idea of the master
from

from whose work it is taken, and displays his invention in the subject, and his manner of treating it; why may we not therefore assert that a print is a picture*? Because colours are wanting; in the

* In order to explain this reply, let it be observed, that all the fine arts have something in common, and something particular to each, that constitutes its proper and distinguishing character. For instance, the painter and the poet must be able to compose a beautiful whole of the different parts of nature they study and copy, which often does not exist but in their own imagination.

Poeta, tabulas cum cepit sibi,

Quærit quod nusquam est gentium, reperit tamen.

Plaut. Pseud. Act. I. Sc. 4.

Both must *design*, each in his own manner, what they have invented; mark and distribute all the parts, and all their bearings, relations, and dependencies: But when all this is done, if the painter should not add colours, and if the poet should not add versification; neither hath the one made a picture, nor the other a poem: for as colours are essential to a picture, so is versification to poetry.

R 4

It

the same manner verification is necessary to a poem.

Throughout the vast field of human science, in the partition of the ingenious arts, each has its boundaries. The intelligence which animates them all, and gives them fecundity, presides over their several productions; *Spiritus intus alit*. The same spirit watches likewise over the preservation of the limits which separate

It will be said, is not a poem transformed into prose, a poem still? Who will say it is not? Do not the plan, the ordonnance, the thoughts, the sentiments, the descriptions still subsist; all, in a word, one can desire to know and understand from the original. I dare adventure to ask in my turn, if a print engraved after a picture, is a picture? If they agree it is not, I am ready, in favour of so beautiful and useful an art, to let pass, without further dispute, the whole comparison between a print in respect of a picture, and a prose translation in respect to the original in verse.

them;

them; none of them can be dislodged out of its proper place, without being culpable in his eyes: It is to disturb the order it has established, it is to create disorder and confusion, where harmony and tranquillity ought to reign.

If certain wits, who confound poetry with prose, had well considered the nature and consequences of their enterprize, they would have contented themselves with excelling in either, without removing the unalterable boundaries by which they are essentially separated. But let us search into the origin of such an innovation.

The poet, whose art consists wholly in imitation and painting, will find, say they, in prose, and there more abundantly than in verse, all that is necessary for
painting

painting and imitation. Wherefore, without subjecting the liberty of his genius to the constraints and fetters of verse, which always too straitly confine the imagination, he will attain to the end of his art; and his compositions, though in prose, will notwithstanding be in reality excellent poems.

In answer to this reasoning, I say that a poet is not naturally an imitator only, since he hath the free choice of the means he employs in imitating: But that he is tied down to verse in his imitations.

The painter, the musician, and the poet, have equally for their end and object imitation: The musician imitates by sounds, the painter by colours, and the poet by chosen words; the different union of which, within the bounds of
an

an unvaried measure, produce an infinitely diversified harmony. This is what is called verse : And because by the aid of this harmony, the poet, more hardy than either the musician or the painter, makes images pass which are far more lively and grand than any prose can admit, and thus gives an original air to his copy ; his imitation is termed in one word *poem*, *i. e.* work ; and he himself, the author of such a wonderful imitation is denominated, by way of eminence, *the worker, ποιητης*. Hence the authority of the first poets over the human mind.

Sylvestres homines facer interpretsque deorum
Cædibus & fœdo victu deterruit Orpheus,

Hor. Art. Poet.

For most assuredly it was not by odes in prose that Orpheus tamed lions and tygers,

Dictus ob hoc lenire tigres rabidosque leones.

Nor

generosity of this untutored Indian, is not judge of whole nations from a few individual accounts; but remember, that all people are equally the work of the omnipotent Deity: If we are more enlightened, it should inspire us with sentiments of universal benevolence, not with the vain impertinence of prejudice. When we condemn a whole people as barbarians, let us imitate the exalted sentiments of the Indian, and display much humanity for the unknown, and undid greatness of soul.

In the instances which I have given, the sublime appears in an undid greatness of soul, which is thrown into the actions or words of the heroic characters. The reader, from memory, will add many others; and know none more expressive and re-

At
nce
N
om
at an
ions
in bo
iverfa
ry and
ies an
And
author
he nam
e in ve
are ran
morpho
al wor
ould t
e stile
it the
visions

Nor that Amphion raised the walls of
Thebes,

*Dictus & Amphion, Thebanæ conditor arcis.
Saxa movere sono testudinis, & prece blanda
Ducere quo vellet.*

It was by the magical power of fine
verse*, that both getting fast hold of the
human heart, led men to virtue; inso-
much that the glorious name of poet
being due to the admiration with which
men were struck by their verse, it could
never after be acquired or preserved but
by means of the same enchanting versifi-
cation which gave birth to it.

The poet then has measures and num-
bers for every kind of imitation.

*Res gestæ regumque ducumque, & tristia bella,
Quo scribi possint numero monstravit Homerus.
Versibus impariter junctis querimonia primum,
Post etiam inclusa est voti sententia compos.*

* Canto quæ solitus—Amphion *Dirctæ* 50.
Virg. Ec. ii.

It

It may always be asked, whether prose is not susceptible of cadence and harmony? It is undoubtedly. Nor can any thing be more evident from numberless compositions both antient and modern; yet a multitude of objections still remain against confounding them both; for as there is a certain and universally allowed difference between poetry and prose, we cannot fix the boundaries any where so well as in versification. And indeed no writer, as a French author justly observes, ever assumed the name of a poet, when he did not compose in verse. Neither Apuleius nor Lucian are ranked in that class: Yet the *Metamorphoses* of the former is a very poetical work; and the *History of Psyche* would be a poem, were it not in prose. The style of Apuleius is florid enough to merit the new name of poetical-prose: The visions of Lucian

in

in his True History, are of the same kind: His stile is gay and flowery, being decked with the flowers only to be gathered in the garden of the Muses: But neither of them is classed with the poets. And why? Because neither of them wrote in verse. I might say the same of Scipio's Dream: the beauty, the sublimity of which composition would have merited Cicero the first rank among the poets, if prose could have gained that prize*.

I cannot believe that the illustrious author of Telemachus ever thought his work a poem; he was too well acquainted with every species of the belles lettres, not to pay a proper regard to those invariable limits which ought never to be

* See the Memoires de Literature tiré des Registres de l'Academie Royale des Inscriptions & Belles Lettres, tome xiii. p. 310.

destroyed.

destroyed. He never meant that his agreeable romance should be an example for other composers, to assume the title of poets from works composed in prose.

Such effects would bring the European poetry to the same class as that of eastern nations, who never produced true poems: Nine out of ten of their poems are nothing but strings of monstrous and extravagant metaphors, and hyperboles, and affected enigmatical epithets cloathed in high-sounding prose.

In fine, if one could merit the name of poet by writing in prose, every one would aspire at the character: A high-swoln stile would hold the rank of the true sublime; an arbitrary disposition of phrases and periods would hold the rank of harmony; and besides, the ideas called poetical being trite, and within the reach

reach of every one, every new day would bring forth some new monster called a poem. Fine poets, disgusted to see their laurels thus prostituted to every trifler, would abandon an art from which formerly they derived real honour; and ranking this pretended poetry with the lowest arts, they will say with indignation,

*Frangere leves calamos, & scinde, Thalia, libellos;
Si dare tutori calceus ista potest*.*

Such pretensions are unjust, and as much as we may admire the beautiful painting of a Fenelon, or the sublime strokes of an Ossian, yet we should have a greater regard to propriety than to rank them immediately as poems. There are beauties peculiar to prose, and it requires a vast share of natural genius, and acquired elegance, to compose that which

* Mart. lib. ix. Ep. 75.

is perfectly beautiful; There is more sentiment in Mr. Addison's prose than in half our poems; why therefore should prose, which hath its own special beauty, go about to beg a foreign one? and, above all, let it not flatter itself with the hopes of ever equalling poetry by the aid of borrowed embellishments.

Let us call to mind the pleasure good verses afford us, when the truth and beauty of sentiments are supported, nay enhanced, by the charms of numbers and harmony, take powerful hold of our soul, and entirely possess it*. When the enthusiasm of a poet seizes the actor, and passes from him to the hearer; if so much as one word is displaced, if but one syllable is out of order, if the harmony be broken in the smallest degree by negli-

* Memoires de Litt.

gent pronunciation, all our pleasure vanishes. What must be the case, if the verse is wholly destroyed and reduced to mere prose? Nothing would remain but, at most, what Horace calls *Disjecti membra poetæ*, the shattered members of a disjointed poet, which can no more make a poem than severed scattered limbs a body.

It may be asked, what is the first and essential property of good poetry, supposing that all poems must have versification, but that there may be many versified pieces without being really poetry? A question not to be answered at once; for, like many other critical points, it has given rise to more opinions than one. It has been asserted, that there can be no poem without fiction; than which there cannot be a falser assertion: But here some pains

pains are necessary to combat an opinion which is supported by several learned men, for whom I have a very high regard, though their arguments on this subject do not convince me. They imagining fable to be inseparable from poetry, place those whose works are not animated by the presence of some feigned personage, or some allegorical divinity, amongst the versifiers only. A poet, say they, ought always to *create*; the name signifies a *creator*; and therefore, to answer their profession, and to create, they ought to leave precepts to philosophers and facts to historians, and to invent some agreeable lie, under which they can veil some useful truth: Without this, none merits to be called Poet; and Virgil himself would never have obtained that name, had he confined his labours to his four books of *Georgics*.

Those who reason in this manner, are at no loss to find several ancient authorities for supporting their opinion; they cite the example and words of Socrates : This grave philosopher, in his last conversation with his friends, the day he was to die a martyr for truth, tells them, that in obedience to certain divine inspirations, which commanded him to apply himself to music, he had composed, in prison, verses in honour of God. And afterwards, that being persuaded, one, in order to be a poet, must compose, not reasonings, but fables, he had put those of *Æsop** into verse, because he was not capable of inventing new ones †. Plutarch, after noting these words of Socrates, throws Empedocles, Parmenides, Nican-
der, and Theognis out of the number of poets; “ because (says he) we know there

* Plato in *Phædro*, † *Memoires de Litt.*

may be sacrifices without music and dancing ; but there can be no poetry without fables and lies. Castelvietto, who has acquired some reputation by his Commentary upon Aristotle's Art of Poetry, and who, in his bold decisions, often shews more subtilty than solidity, pretends that the Georgics of Virgil do not merit the name of a poet to their author *, and that

* The opinions of different critics are infinite : Never was any one however more false than Trublet's, that versification is the most important part of poetry : there is more reason even in Castelvietto's description than the following ones.

Dans la prose, ce qu'il y a de plus important, c'est le fond des choses ; dans les vers, c'est la forme & le style. Ainsi il faut plus de pensées & d'esprit dans la prose que dans les vers ; & le mérite le plus essentiel de ceux-ci & le plus décisif pour le succès, est celui d'être bien faits, bien tournés : d'être bons entant que vers. Le principal mérite d'un poëte est d'être versificateur. De-là, en grande partie, la préférence qu'on donne

that physiology can never be the subject of poetry ; which, faith he *, was intended not to instruct, but barely to amuse and entertain the gross minds of the ignorant multitude.

Several very ingenious writers have imagined the essential principle of true poetry to be inversion, particularly the French critic father du Cerceau. The *vis poetica*, according to him, consisting in suspension. Now inversion begets sus-

ne à Racine sur Corneille, la grande estime pour Despréaux, pour Rousseau, &c.

Essais sur divers Sujets de Litterature, &c.
tome iv. p. 178.

And again,

Dans la prose, les pensées sont de premiere nécessité, le style n'est que de seconder. C'est tout le contraire dans les vers.

Essais sur divers Sujets de Litterature, &c.
tome iv. p. 190.

* Per dilettae e recreare gli animi della rozza moltitudine. p. 29.

pension,

ension, therefore must inversion be in the *vis poetica*, and consequently the characteristic difference between verse and prose.*

But father du Cerceau never reflected that this principle of his was to extend farther than the French poetry: the Latins had prosaic verses as well as we, were they only those of Cicero; but why were they prose? Certainly not for want of having their inversions; for, according to the father, they would not have been affected by these, the order of the words being a thing of indifference.

The suspension of the sense is certainly a great beauty in verse. It is likewise true, that this is often occasioned by the

* Batteux's Principles of Literature, vol. i. p. 154, Translation.

transposition of the words ; but it is very extraordinary that father du Cerceau should not perceive that this suspension agrees as well with prose as verse. It is one of the fundamental rules of eloquence, first, to present such objects to the mind as are capable of interesting and attaching it ; then to make it wait a while in expectation of the particular word which is to satisfy it, and terminate the sense of the period. And, indeed, every one follows this as a kind of natural rule, who has a sufficient freedom of elocution to enable him to express his ideas in such an order as is most likely to interest and attach the hearer.

Besides, the poetic inversions of which P. du Cerceau speaks, are the most plain of any, consisting merely in the displacing of any two ideas, by putting the case go-

verned before the governing verb, which begets a much less degree of suspension than the inversions in oratory, where whole phrases are transposed : and, indeed, it is rather the arrangement of things, than words, that constitutes true suspension in every work of eloquence ; these are disposed in such a manner, that the first introducing the rest do either excite our imagination by their singularity, or our heart by the relation they appear to have with its interests, so as not to permit us to continue indifferent to what is to follow.

Lastly, if inversion and suspension constitute the essence of verse, then, wherever one or other of these are wanting, it is no longer verse ; but if this was the case, three parts in four of the verses of our best poets must be erased ; for in
those

those of them which abound the most with inversions, in twenty lines there shall not be perhaps twelve with this pretended essential character.

Although inversion cannot be accounted as the essential distinction of poetry from prose, yet all must allow that it is a very great enlivener of poems, and that there is but little enthusiasm of poetry, where there is no inversion; inversion, properly and spiritedly used, has a great effect, and is much more common in poetry than in prose: Therefore, altho' it assists in throwing the language off from prose, and is one of the properties of poetry, yet it is not so essential as to form the characteristical difference,

The abbé de Batteux says, *poetry is the imitation of elegant nature, expressed by a measured*

measured discourse. In this imitation, *says* he, are at once included, gods, kings, the simple citizen in his village, the shepherd in his field, and even the brute creation, as supposed discoursing with each other, or with mankind; poetry then must make these gods, kings, &c. speak and discourse in the manner they really do. This is the object of imitation: But as this is not a servile imitation of simple and common nature, but of nature selected, embellished, and improved as much as possible; poetry, therefore, is not only to make its men and gods speak as they *commonly* speak, but as they *should* speak, supposing each in his highest degree of perfection. Hence it follows, that the prosaic strain is that of nature such as she is; the poetic strain, that of nature such as she *should be*, i. e. of elegant nature.

This

This author's definition is incomplete, and of course his reasoning false : Poetry is the imitation of all nature, as well as the elegant part of it ; and the term *elegant* is here used in too extensive a sense ; for there are many sublime passages in the great poets, which may be said to be natural, but not the imitation of elegant nature. These short definitions of extensive subjects are almost always faulty and incorrect : He speaks of the servile imitation of *simple* and *common* nature as an aim beneath a poet : I confess I do not understand such terms, and I apprehend that many of the most sublime and most beautiful strokes in poetry are the imitations of *simple* nature, which wants no embellishments to render her real copies striking to every mind.

The true and peculiar stamp of poetry is easier imagined than described ; and
while

while we enjoy the pleasure of being carried away by the force of genius and the enthusiastic raptures of poetic fire, we feel sensibly the difference between poetry and prose, and are struck with surprize at the attempt to confound them. Upon more mature reflection, we perceive that these two species of composition differ greatly in their manner of expressing the same ideas. Batteux justly observes, that in prose the verb is put before the case governed; in poetry the reverse always takes place. If the active voice is most frequent in prose, poetry disdaining it adopts the passive; she is prodigal of her epithets, which prose makes use of only on certain occasions, and that sparingly; and she places them before the substantive, where prose puts them after, and after where prose puts them before. Poetry employs singular
for

for plural, and plural for singular*. She never calls men or things by their proper names; with her it is the Son of Peleus, the Shepherd of Sicily, the Swan of Dirce: With her the Year is the Great Circle, which is completed by a revolution of months. She renders the ideas more concise, deepens her colours, and suffers nothing about her mean or common, every thing is rich, every thing is full: Her way is strewn with golden sands, or covered with the choicest flowers. She takes a part for the whole, and the whole for a part. She invests spiritual substances with a corporeal form, gives life to the lifeless, and, as if she was ashamed of being within the ken of vulgar minds, envelopes herself with the clouds of allegory, recounts things but by halves, throws forth her strokes of

* Princip. of Lit.

erudition in a hasty manner, and gives transient touches of places, events, and times, taking it always for granted, that those who hear her are fully capable of comprehending her meaning. In fine, it is for this reason that she even ventures to borrow foreign turns, to make herself the more remarkable, and raise herself above the common level. She describes such circumstances as prose passes over, and sometimes even piques herself upon giving them very minutely and carefully; in all which she has one end in view, that of raising herself above the strain which is natural to the particular species in which the poetical performance is made; and any one of these several means is alone sufficient to prevent the verse from becoming prose.

¹⁰ The true language of the passions is often the language of poetry; and when
the

the imitation is complete, the poetic enthusiasm shines the brightest*. That instant any violent passion transports our mind, it likewise seizes upon our body, and spreads a sudden disorder through it: the blood flows with impetuosity, the countenance is inflamed, the eyes sparkle, the voice strengthens; short broken sentences burst out, one upon the back of another; the warm influx of animal spirits heats the fancy, and various thoughts rapidly crowd upon the mind: We express them with all possible promptitude, and this impetuosity does not suffer us to observe exact order in our discourse: We no longer attend to the ordinary links of speech: Our phrases are bold and hardy; because, being wholly occupied with what strikes us, the terms we use do not appear to us hyperbolical: We break forth naturally into exclamations, apo-

* Memoires de Litt.

strophes,

strophes, interrogations; and we can address ourselves to inanimate things; because in the trouble we are, all nature seems to us to interest itself in our behalf: Such is the enthusiasm of the passions, and such also is the enthusiasm of poetry *.

But

* Every poet, when he first begins to compose, raises his imagination in such a manner, that it may represent objects to him in a degree of perfection above vulgar nature. Inspired by the presence of these objects, strongly imprinted on his mind, his style necessarily takes a dye above that of nature; and this dye is that of poetry, which constitutes the character of the verse in all languages. This now is what we call *the poetry of the verse*. To give a precise definition of which, we shall say, that a verse is poetic, where it has some kind of ornament, be it of whatsoever nature; and when the measured expression has a certain elevation, force, and grace in the words, turns and numbers, which is not to be met with in the same subject when treated by prose: in a word, when it shews us nature enobled, enriched, decorated, and exalted above herself. Every one will allow, that there are several different tones or strains, at least, in the different kinds of writing.

But enthusiasm is not alone necessary to form true poetry; and perhaps it would be an endless enquiry to discover any single essential property which universally distinguishes it from prose. There are of these more than one: 1. Versification is absolutely necessary; there can be no poem without it*. 2. Inversion is a great

Now the tone proper to each kind has other degrees of tones, which constitute the tones of the particular species; and in these species themselves, there are still subdivisions for each subject in particular. The utmost possible perfection, then, of the tone peculiar to each kind, and of the subject in each kind, is what makes *the poetry of the verse*.

Batteux Princip. of Lit. vol. i. p. 159.

* That there is a *Charm* in Poetry, arising from its *Numbers* only, may be made evident from the five or six first lines of the *Paradise Lost*, where, without any pomp of phrase, sublimity of sentiment, or the *least Degree of Imitation*, every reader must find himself to be sensibly delighted; and that, only from the graceful and simple *Cadence* of the *Numbers*, and that artful *Variation* of the *Cesura* or *Pause*, so essential to the harmony of every good poem.

An

great heightener of poetry ; and though not the essential property, yet there are few very fine passages in the works of celebrated poets without it. 3. As to fiction, in compliance to the opinion of some eminent critics, those poems which display a great invention, and a lively imagination, have more merit as poems than didactic pieces *, which are the product of

An *English Heroic* verse consists of ten *Semipeds*, or half-feet. Now in the lines above-mentioned, the *Pauses* are varied upon *different* semipeds, in the order which follow ; as may be seen by any who will be at the pains to examine

Paradise Lost, Book i.

Verse 1						Semiped 7
— 2	}	has its pause fall upon	{	—	6	6
— 3				—	6	6
— 4				—	5	5
— 5				—	3	3
— 6				—	4	4

Harris's Treatises, p. 93.

* The multitude, struck with the measure, which is so sensibly the characteristic of poetic expression, and distinguishes it from prose, give the name of

as T 2 poem

of reason and judgment : There is more
poetry in the Rape of the Lock than the
Essay

poem to whatever is in verse : history, physics, theology, morality, and the whole body of arts and sciences, which should naturally belong to prose, are by this means made the subjects of poetry. The ear struck by a regular cadence; the imagination heated by a few bold and striking images, which stood in need of being authorised by poetic licence; sometimes even the art of the author himself, who being naturally a poet, may have communicated part of his own fire to matters otherwise dry in themselves, and which appeared not susceptible of any graces; all these things together, seduce and carry away minds but little instructed in the nature of things; and as soon as they perceive the outward appearance of poetry, there they stop, without giving themselves the trouble to enquire any further : They perceive it is in verse, and immediately cry out, a poem, merely because it is not prose.

This prejudice is of as ancient a date as poetry : according to Homer * and Titus Livius †, the

* Παλὺς δ' ὀνείμαντο ὄρασι,
Κῆροι δ' ὀρχήσαντες ἰδύεον, ἐν δ' ἄρα νοῖαντο,
Αὐλοὶ φορμηγυῖές τε βοὴν ἔχον. Iliad. xviii.

† Tit. Liv. lib. i. Dec. I. Per urbem ire cupientes ca-
mina cum tripediis solemnique saltatu iussit.

first

Essay on Man. 4. Enthusiasm is a most striking ingredient in the composition of the finest poetry * : there are few poems of

first poems were hymns, which the people sung, and danced to them at the same time. Now, in order to form a concert from these three modes of expression, words, song, and dance, it was absolutely necessary that they should have some common measure, or time, by which they might all three be made to fall in together ; otherwise the harmony would be quite disconcerted. This measure then was like the colouring in a picture, which is the first thing that takes the eye ; whereas the imitation, which is the ground or design of the piece, escapes a superficial observer.

Bartheux Princip. of Lit. vol. i. p. 91.

* Mr. Melmoth, with his usual penetration and elegance, pays a due tribute to this great enlivener of poetry.

“ I am persuaded, indeed, that nothing great or glorious was ever performed where enthusiasm had not a principal concern ; and as our passions add vigor to our actions, enthusiasm gives spirit to our passions. I might add too, that it even opens and enlarges our capacities : Accordingly I have been informed, that one of the great lights of the present age never sits down to study, till

T 3

he

of merit without some of it ; but where it flows in a rapid stream, it stamps a most superior excellence. There is little occasion to define enthusiasm ; it is that rapid force of lightning which renders poetry so forcible, which enflames in the sublime, melts in the pathetic, and glows in the beautiful*. 5. All poetry should be a just imitation of nature ; whatever

he has raised his imagination by the power of music. For this purpose he has a band of instruments placed near his library, which play till he finds himself elevated to a proper height, upon which he gives a signal, and they instantly cease.

Sir T. Fitzosborne's Letters, p. 2.

* Let us therefore boldly conclude, that the poetical stile is none other than the natural stile of the passions ; and when a discourse in which that style reigns, is likewise adorned by the harmony of verse, then it is called a poem, *i. e.* a *Work*, by way of eminence ; and he who composes it is called a *Poet*, a word which does not signify an *Inventor* of *Fictions*, but only a *Worker* ; as if it were intended to denote the most perfect workman, or one whose works are peculiarly admirable.

Mem. de Lit.

the

the subject, it should be painted naturally.

Every reader will of course add those qualities which may appear particularly to him : All these properties of fine poetry are found in the works of some poets ; and in those of others, none of them except versification ; which some may imagine the essential characteristic ; but if they consider that there are many pieces so devoid of all poetic fire as to be really contemptible, they must be sensible that this alone will never give the title of poem *.

I avoid

* But let none accuse me of considering the versification merely as an adventitious ornament ; I look upon it, on the contrary, as an ornament that must of necessity add to nature : and as the partizans of fiction will not give the title of a poem to a thread of fables wrote in prose ; so I will not give it to a work full of enthusiasm, which is not in verse. But it is so evident, that poetic beauty does not chiefly consist in versification,

I avoid drawing any absolute and conclusive definitions of poetry, as I am very sensible that such attempts seldom or never succeed to the satisfaction of judicious readers ; and the more learning a man is master of, the less ready will he be to assent to general maxims. His experience in literature, (if I may be allowed the expression) will remind him of the infinity of exceptions which are so often to be made to these concise definitions : those who perplex the subject with needless disquisitions, only draw the reader into a labyrinth of arguments, where he forgets his natural sentiments, and instead of them relies on his acquired taste and critical knowledge : At the sight of versi-

cation, that how much soever the work of a great poet is disfigured, however it may be dishevelled by a bad translation, yet one will always find in it what Horace elegantly calls *disjecti membra poetæ* : The members of a shattered poet.

fication

fiction we naturally cry out a Poem! But on reading it why may we not, on discovering the total want of merit, reject its pretensions? This method of proceeding will throw the determination entirely on the private taste of the individuals, where it ought always to rest; for no Aristarchus in criticism ought to expect his decisions to pass current with his neighbours, who have the same right as he to judge for themselves; and perhaps with greater justness.—I apprehend the reader will not be disgusted at the length to which I have drawn the subject, as I have left the conclusion of the argument to his own taste and judgment.

F I N I S.

VOL. I.

E R R A T A.

J. JOV

Page. Line.

For

Read &

6	13	event	effect
99	13	would	should
123	13	this	these
135	17	and all the rest that we find in this treatise	and those other maxims we find in Bossu's treatise.
136	5	would	should
137	4	these	there
150	3	works	words
153	last.	are	is

VOL. II.

7	6	Shepherds have	Spenser has
144	15	strictly	directly
146	3	lap	lull
	last.	Metugan	Metregan
151	4	never	ever
163	20	benevolence	beneficence

VOL. II. PART II.

4	17	not be malevolence	not be with malevolence
13	16	wit	genius
46	5	<i>A reference wanting</i>	* See Mr. Spence's Poly- metis.
50	8	compassion	Campaspe
	12	aburdly	absurdly
79	16	tract	trait
80	16	every	ever
82	16	this	his
	last.	If this work	If Emile
85	8	rule	rules
	19	and	which
134	last.	tracts	traits
137	19	just	jest
146	19	despenfe	dispenfe
154	16	and to this the following words quoted above al- lude	and to this the following words allude

VOL. III.

22	2	the one weakening	the one, and weakening
26	12	is a vast	is not a vast
145	last.	His son, M. Crébillon le fils, enjoys	His son, M. Crébillon, enjoys
146	9	Ecumoife	Ecumoire

VOL. IV.

ERRATA.

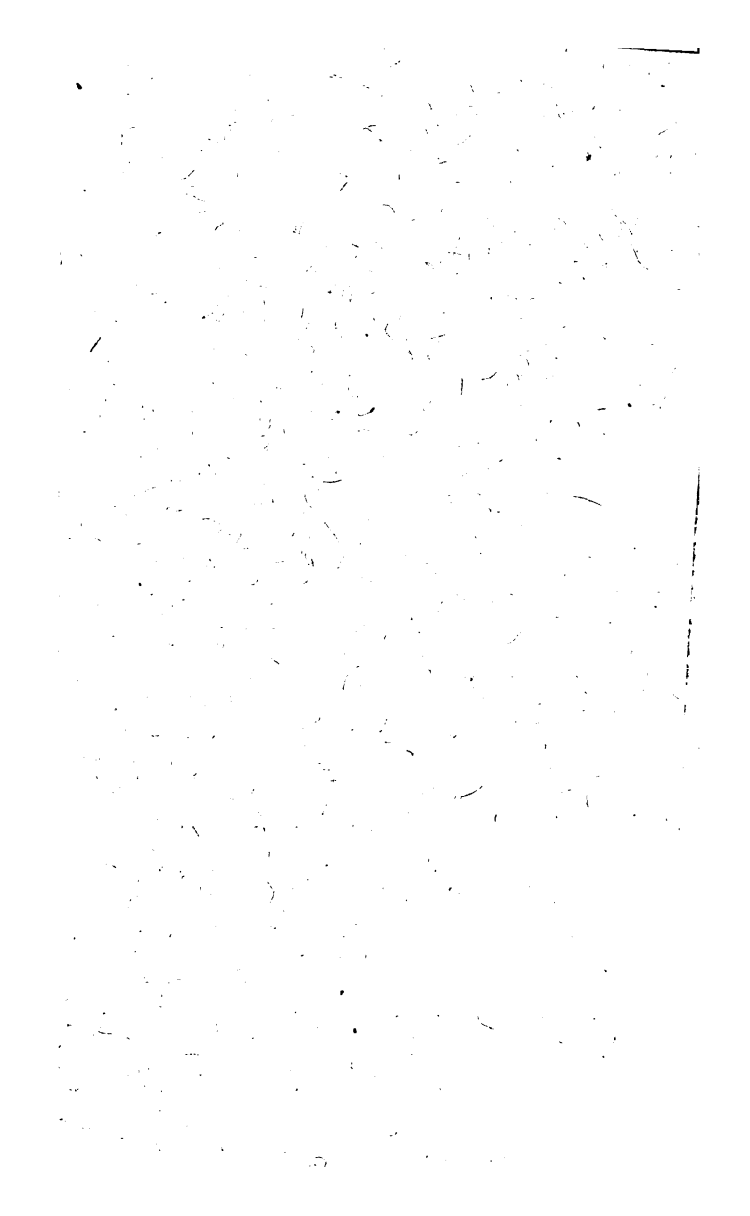
Page.	Line.	For	Read
53	8	an	no
69	6	expression	conception
70	7	This Slander enters.	This viperous Slander enters.
152	137	Orb	Orb
160	1st.	equally	greatly
163		<i>For the metaphor mentioned from Othway, see p. 164.</i>	
164	19	Break	Brush
210	3	non	not

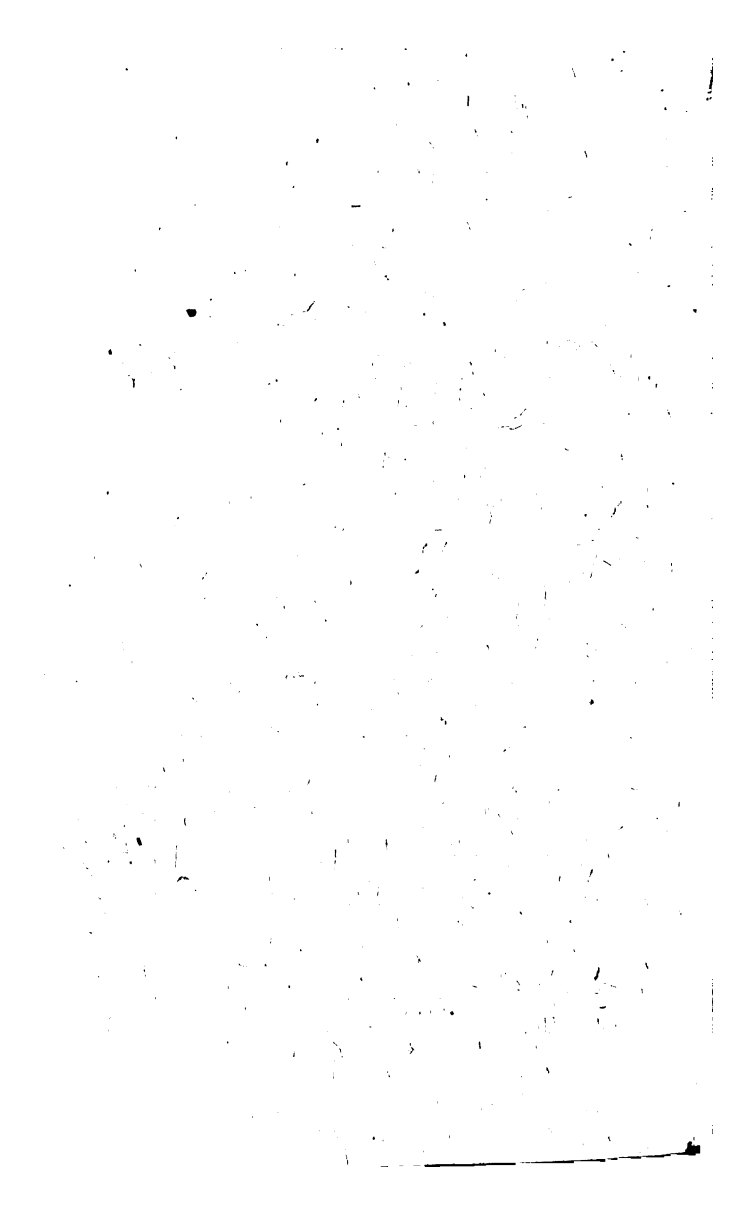
8.10
7.10

411









MAY 20 1920

